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Boris Vadimovich Sokolov Hunting
for Stalin, hunting for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

Military secrets of the twentieth century -

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The author of the book, well-known historian and publicist Boris Sokolov, invites readers to look behind the scenes of the secret struggle of the secret services of the great powers, who tried during the Second World War to organize an assassination attempt on the leaders of the states opposing them. What assassination attempts were planned on Hitler and Stalin, why were they unsuccessful, what role did the intelligence services of Germany and the USSR play in this? The author answers these and other questions in his new book.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov Hunting
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We are pretty well aware of the Soviet intelligence and agents of the Second World War in Germany and Japan. Many books and articles have been written about the so-called "Red Chapel" - an extensive network of Soviet intelligence in Western Europe, especially in Germany, where a large group of officers and officials who held senior positions in headquarters and ministries worked for the USSR. The names of Lieutenant Harro Schulze-Boysen, Professor Arvid Harnack and many other members of the Red Chapel are now widely known. Interestingly, almost all of them collaborated with Soviet intelligence not for money, but for ideological reasons.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services "

considerations, being deeply convinced that Hitler and his regime pose a terrible threat to Germany and the whole world.

A lot of books have been written and films made about scouts Nikolai Kuznetsov and Richard Sorge, who at one time became cult historical figures. Such a legendary figure is still Rudolf Abel. That's just about his work in Germany during wartime, they usually speak deafly and

not too clear.

In recent years, the lists of "our people in Berlin" have been replenished with new names, in particular thanks to Pavel Sudoplatov's book "Intelligence and the Kremlin." In it, for example, a lot is told about the prototype of the dashing Soviet intelligence officer Stirlitz from Yulian Semenov's novel "Seventeen Moments of Spring". The novel was filmed as a television series by director Tatyana Lioznova, and thanks to this monumental film, Stirlitz became an indispensable real people's favorite and joke character. However, the fate of the prototype was much sadder. In the autumn of 1942, the Gestapo officer Wilhelm Lehman, who worked for the NKVD, was arrested in Berlin and executed, and even his wife did not know about the execution (officially, Lehman was reported missing until the end of the war). By the way, for this agent, the material incentive was clearly not the main one in cooperation with Soviet intelligence, and, like most of the Red Chapel leaders, he ultimately received death as a reward for his deadly work.

Of course, not everything is known about all the outstanding Soviet agents in Germany today. However, the archives testify that since the end of 1943, when the group of Shandor Rado was arrested in Switzerland, information of strategic importance from behind the front line has not been received in the USSR any more. Some of Rado's sources have not yet been disclosed, and there is reason to believe that a number of agents actually supplied him with disinformation prepared by the German intelligence services.

We see a different picture with regard to German agents in the Soviet Union, who operated during the Great Patriotic War. Almost nothing has been written about them in our country for several decades. Until now, there have been no publications even about exposed German spies who occupied a more or less prominent position in Soviet institutions and headquarters and supplied the German command with more or less valuable information. Usually counterintelligence memoirs and historians of Soviet intelligence and counterintelligence report only about the capture of reconnaissance or sabotage groups shortly after they crossed the front line and successful radio games that were played by the Chekists with the Abwehr (German military intelligence) with the help of radio operators who fell into their hands and were recruited. At the same time, the myth remains that Soviet society was completely inaccessible to enemy agents during the war years, at least in all significant military-political and economic spheres. One gets the impression that the Germans did not have serious agents in our higher headquarters (starting from the army headquarters) and civilian institutions (people's commissariats, GKO, etc.). Let us suppose that historians and memoirists do not prevaricate here, and in 1941-1945 there really were no revelations of major German spies. But if there were no revelations, this does not mean at all that there were no agents. On the contrary, German documents published after the war show that important reports came to Germany, which were by no means the fruit of disinformation on the part of the Soviet side during the radio games.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

According to General Sudoplatov, until 1943, Soviet intelligence seriously considered the possibility of organizing an assassination attempt on Hitler. Then Stalin ordered to stop this secret work, fearing that it would be easier for the Western powers to negotiate a separate peace with the Fuhrer's successors. I will also touch on this version and try to answer the question of whether we really had a plan to eliminate Hitler.

But the German and Japanese secret services in the USSR were engaged not only in intelligence. There is evidence that they were preparing an assassination attempt on Stalin, however, as you know, they did not succeed in this. True, no reliable documents on this score have yet been found. All versions are based only on the post-war memoirs of intelligence officers in Germany and Japan.

Let's see if they can be trusted. Let's start with the story of the assassination attempt on the Soviet leader, allegedly being prepared by Japanese intelligence back in 1938.

HUNTING FROM THE EAST, OR THE CASE OF COMMISSAR LYUSHKOV

In the early morning of June 13, 1938, a man of 37-38 years old, with thick black hair and in a tunic with three rhombuses of the Commissar of State Security of the 3rd rank, headed towards the Manchurian border guards guarding the borders of the puppet empire of Manchukuo with the Soviet Union near Lake Khasan on buttonholes (in the army this corresponded to the rank of commander). His large, crystal-clear eyes under long lashes peered into those they met with the sharp, attentive gaze of a professional interrogator. The early belly betrayed a man accustomed to desk work.

During the arrest, the unknown did not show any resistance and immediately declared that he was a high-ranking officer of the NKVD. As evidence, he presented an official certificate number 83, issued in the name of Genrikh Samoilovich Mlyushkov, Commissar of State Security of the 3rd rank, who is the head of the NKVD Directorate of the Far Eastern Territory. The certificate was signed by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR, General Commissar of State Security Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov. Rather, all his positions and rank are affixed, but the autograph itself is missing. Issued on February 1, 1938, the certificate was valid until the end of the year. The detainee also had with him a ticket for a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and Genrikh Samoylovich was elected from the Kamchatka-Kolyma constituency, the most suitable for the NKVD: because of the abundance of camps. And, as he honestly admitted, he took with him 3,500 Manchurian yuan from the funds to pay for foreign agents.

Genrikh Samoylovich asked to be sent to Japan as soon as possible. He explained his escape by fear of becoming a victim of another bloody purge. He was ready to tell the Japanese everything he knew.

Three weeks later, on July 1, the Japanese authorities decided to make public the fact that a high-ranking security officer had fled to the Land of the Rising Sun. The newspapers published a photo of Lyushkov and a photocopy of his ID. The headlines were suitably catchy: "Victims of the Purges", "One Million Soviet Citizens Executed", "USSR in the

blood." Here is what, for example, the Hakodate Shimbun newspaper wrote on July 8, 1938 in connection with the Lyushkov case:

"In the Far East, a system of camps has been created ... for victims of terror,

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

unleashed by Stalin inside the country. According to Lyushkov, all the show trials organized after the assassination of Kirov in December 1934 (the united Zinoviev-Kamenev bloc, the Sokolnikov-Pyatakov center, Marshal Tukhachevsky, etc.) were fabricated from beginning to end. They were prepared and carried out on Stalin's red-handed instructions ... There are about 4-5 million people in the camps. And is this the progressive social system that Stalin, with the help of the Comintern, is trying to impose on world civilization?

In figures, Lyushkov allowed himself a sensation for the sake of exaggeration. So, in the camps in 1938 there were only 1,882 thousand prisoners, and the number of those sentenced to death for political crimes in 1921-1953 far did not reach the figure named by Genrikh Samoylovich and amounted to 786 thousand people. However, the former Commissar of State Security spoke the pure truth about the fabrication of political trials and the scale of repressions in the country. In this, he himself took an active part.

Lyushkov's escape caused a stir in Moscow at the highest level. His case was discussed at the Politburo and became one of the reasons for the removal of the recently all-powerful N. I. Yezhov. On November 23, 1938, the "iron commissar" addressed the Politburo, the Central Committee and personally to Comrade Stalin with a request for his resignation. One of the reasons for this step, he called the Lyushkov case:

"My fault is that, doubting the political honesty of such people as the former head of the UNKVD of the Far Eastern Territory, the traitor Lyushkov and recently the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR, the traitor Uspensky, did not take sufficient measures of the Chekist precaution and thereby made it possible for Lyushkov to hide in Japan and Uspensky does not know where ..." (Already under Beria, the Chekists tracked down Alexander Ivanovich Uspensky, and he did not succeed in avoiding a bullet in the Lubyanka basement. - B.S).

In the same letter, Yezhov, as expected, repented, recognized "big shortcomings and blunders", but at the same time proudly declared. "Destroyed the enemies great."

At the end of November 1938, Yezhov, having just lost his post as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, but still remaining in the ephemeral position of People's Commissar for Water Transport, admitted in a letter to Stalin: "The moment of Lyushkov's flight was decisive. I literally went crazy. I called Frinovsky (First Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Commander of the 1st Rank. - B.S.) and offered to report to you together. One was unable to. Then I said to Frinovsky: well, now we will be severely punished ... I understood that you should develop a wary attitude towards the work of the NKVD. It was so. I felt it all the time."

Yezhov was not mistaken. The disgraced chief of the NKVD was really going to

"smash", in the same way as he himself previously "smashed the enemies of the people." True, the punishment had to wait a year and a half. They shot the "iron commissar" for "leading a conspiratorial organization", "espionage", falsification of criminal cases and homosexuality on February 4, 1940. The first two accusations were absurd, fantastic, and Nikolai Ivanovich himself more than once hung on innocent people - defendants in political trials. The last two, on the contrary, were absolutely true (but homosexuality is no longer a crime under today's Russian criminal code).

On the same day, MP Frinovsky was also executed. He was charged with

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

the same, except for homosexuality.

The fate of the leaders of the NKVD became known many years later. However, Lyushkov probably guessed that Yezhov and Frinovsky were treated exactly as they were going to do with him. In early June 1938, Genrikh Samoilovich was recalled from Vladivostok to Moscow to be assigned to work in the central apparatus of the NKVD. Lyushkov immediately realized that Yezhov was going to deal with him as with the Chekist of the "old guard" of the former People's Commissar G. G. Yagoda.

In the very first days after his arrival in Japan, the former head of the NKVD of the Far East began to keep a diary, where he told - for the sake of history, of course - why he became a defector. Excerpts from this diary were published in Japanese newspapers, and it appeared in full in August 1938 in the "official" monthly bulletin Gaiji Geppo (foreign police department monthly). Here is how Lyushkov's revelations sound in the reverse translation from Japanese into Russian, made by A. V. Trekhsvyatsky:

"Why did I, a person who held one of the leading positions in the bodies of the "power of the Soviets," decide to take such a step as flight? First of all, I was saving myself from the purge, which was about to touch me. The day before, I received an order to be transferred to a new duty station in Moscow and a directive to immediately leave there; Together with me, a similar telegram was received by the secretary of the Dalkraikom, Legkonravov; summoning senior officials to Moscow with subsequent arrest has recently become commonplace. (As an example, we can cite: the head of the NKVD in the Leningrad region Zakovsky, the head of the NKVD of Ukraine Leplevsky, the head of the NKVD of Belarus Berman, the head of the NKVD in the Sverdlovsk region Dmitriev, etc.). All of them belonged to the leadership of the Chekists of the "old draft", to which I also belong. I felt that in the near future the same fate would befall me. I began to prepare to escape by organizing a business trip to the border area. At first I planned to cross in the Grodekovo region, but in the end I crossed the border in the Posyet region (under the pretext of an operational meeting in the border zone with my agent from Manchukuo. - B.S).

I thought a lot before embarking on such an extraordinary undertaking as fleeing the USSR. I faced a dilemma: like many members of the party and Soviet workers, to be slandered and shot as an "enemy of the people" or to devote the rest of their lives to the fight against the Stalinist policy of genocide, which sacrifices the Soviet and other

peoples. My flight put my family and friends at risk. I deliberately made this sacrifice in order to at least to some extent serve the liberation of the long-suffering Soviet people from the terrorist-dictatorial regime of Stalin.

Here Genrikh Samoilovich is clearly disingenuous. He had to flee, fleeing arrest and execution - what does this have to do with some kind of "conscious victim"? There was no choice anyway: he was saving his own skin. And he took care of his family too. During a search, the Japanese found a telegram with a rather strange text: "I send my kisses ..." Lyushkov explained to them that, having decided to escape, he sent his 27-year-old wife Inna with an 11-year-old daughter to Moscow, and the telegram was a prearranged signal: the family leaves by train through Poland to Western Europe, where the daughters must undergo an emergency operation. Having received such news, Lyushkov immediately crossed the border. Lyushkov's wife failed to leave the USSR. Shortly after her husband's flight, she was arrested.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

As a refugee for lofty ideological considerations, Lyushkov could not inspire trust among the Japanese. After all, he had just completed the deportation of Koreans and Chinese from the Far East to Central Asia from the Far East, and the scope of repressions in the eastern outskirts of Russia reached its peak under him. Therefore, our hero in the diary found it necessary to repent:

"Great are my crimes against the people, since I myself participated in this terrible Stalinist policy, which killed many, many Soviet people. There is no special need to say that the very fact of my flight will be presented as proof that I am a spy, a Japanese hireling who sold out ... But I did not exist and there are no other purposes of flight, except for the ones I have already mentioned.

Why did I choose Japan? I worked in the Far East, that is, the geographical factor played an important role. I am grateful to the country that accepted me as a political refugee and granted me asylum. Not so rarely, opponents of the political regime that reigned in their homeland were forced to flee their country. The leaders of the Bolshevik Party during the struggle against tsarism for a long time found political asylum in the capitalist countries and used the material assistance of these countries in the struggle for their people and were not ashamed of it.

Genrikh Samoilovich hinted at the German money received by the Bolsheviks during the First World War. And he exclaimed pathetically: "Yes, I am a traitor, but I betrayed Stalin, and not my people and homeland, and one day, when the despot is overthrown, I will return home to a new, bright Russia."

Lyushkov further claimed that the events surrounding the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov opened his eyes:

"It became obvious to me that Leninism had lost its pivotal role in party politics. My doubts began with the assassination of Kirov by Nikolaev in 1934. This assassination had a great impact on the party and the state. I was not only in Leningrad at that time and, under the leadership of Yezhov, took part not only in the investigation of this murder, but also in subsequent events: public trials and executions. I had

directly related to the following:

1. The case of the "Leningrad Center" at the beginning of 1935.
2. The case of the "terrorist center" that prepared the assassination of Stalin in the Kremlin in 1935.
3. The case of the "united Trotskyist-Zinoviev center" in August 1936.

In the face of the world community, I must state directly that all these "cases" are fabricated. Nikolaev never belonged to the Zinoviev group. From acquaintance with his diaries it is clear that this is an unbalanced person, who is in captivity of wild fantasies, who imagines himself to be the arbiter of the fate of mankind and a historical figure. This is clearly seen from his diary. The accusations made at the trial in August 1936 (about links with the Trotskyists and the fascist Gestapo, about participation in the conspiracy of Zinoviev and Kamenev and their connection through Tomsy, Rykov and Bukharin with the right center) are fiction. All of them were killed because, like many others, they expressed their disagreement with Stalin's anti-people policy. But they cannot be called outstanding politicians, since they are also responsible for what is happening in the country."

But Lyushkov categorically denied rumors that Stalin himself had a hand in Kirov's assassination. In particular, he argued that Stalin could not organize the murder of the Kirov guard Borisov, an important witness

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

in an attempted case. When, on December 2, 1934, Stalin called Yagoda's deputy Y. S. Agranov and demanded that Borisov be urgently brought to Smolny for interrogation, Lyushkov, at that time the deputy head of the secret political department of the NKVD, was present at this conversation. From Stalin's call to the fatal accident with the truck in which Borisov died, only half an hour passed, and this time, Lyushkov argued as a professional, was completely insufficient to organize and carry out the assassination attempt. He also rejected the widespread version that L. V. Nikolaev killed Kirov out of jealousy, suspecting him of his wife's lover. And indeed, in the diary of the killer Kirov, published several decades later, the main reason that pushed him to the terrorist attack is completely different: resentment at the unfair, as he believed, dismissal of him from his job at the Leningrad Institute of History of the CPSU (6). In his diary, Nikolaev, a man with an extremely quarrelsome character, first wrote about his intention to kill the director of the institute, then the second secretary of the regional committee, and only at the end he chose Kirov as the main culprit for the fact that the complaints of his offended party member, the Leningrad Regional Committee did not satisfy.

All of Leningrad was talking about Mironych's love affairs, but there is absolutely no evidence that he was in connection with Milda Draule and that her husband, Nikolaev, found out about this. And why would Genrikh Samoilovich embellish the moral character of Kirov?

But back to Lyushkov. The reason for his flight was the preparation by the Soviet side of a provocation in the area of the Zaozernaya height near Lake Khasan, which he, the head of the Far Eastern NKVD, could not help but know. June 8, 1938

In the 1990s, the Main Military Council of the Red Army adopted a resolution on the creation of the Far Eastern Front on the basis of the Special Far Eastern Red Banner Army, which clearly indicated the approach of a military thunderstorm. Lyushkov, through a network of informants and special departments, knew the true state of the Soviet troops in the Far East and seriously feared that in case of failure he would become one of the scapegoats. Here Genrikh Samoilovich, apparently, was not mistaken either. The failure at Lake Khasan cost the commander of the Far Eastern Front, Marshal of the Soviet Union Vasily Konstantinovich Blucher, not only a high post, but also his head.

According to the Japanese version, published in August 1938 in the Gaiji Geppo bulletin published by the Security Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Japan, events developed as follows:

"The incident of the Changgufen height (the Japanese name is Zaozernaya. - B.S.) began on July 12, 1938, when several dozen Soviet soldiers crossed the Soviet-Manchurian border and, having illegally occupied the Changu-fen height, began to build fortifications on it. On July 14, representatives of the authorities of Manchukuo, and on July 15 - the government of Japan protested in connection with the actions of the Soviet side: in response to this, the USSR continued to increase the number of its contingent in the height area. As a result of countermeasures taken by the imperial army, as well as negotiations between the Japanese ambassador to the USSR Shigemitsu and the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Litvinov, which took place on August 4, 7 and 10, an armistice agreement was concluded, and then, on August 11, an agreement on the demarcation of the border in this area owing to which this incident was finally resolved.

The Soviet version of what caused the fighting at Lake Khasan, of course, is different. According to it, on July 15, 1938, the Japanese gendarme Shakuni Matsushima violated the border in the Zaozernaya area. Shot from

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fight 8

rifle intruder was killed. He was shot by the head of the engineering service of the Posyet detachment V. Venevitin. The Japanese claimed that the corpse lay on the Manchurian side of the border and that the Russians were therefore to blame for the incident. An investigation commissioned by Blucher showed that the murder actually took place on the territory of Manchukuo. And it all started a few days ago. In the first days of July, Soviet border guards secretly took up positions on the height of Zaozernaya and began to dig trenches there and erect barbed wire. The border ran along the crest of this hill. On July 12, the Japanese discovered Soviet fortifications, and on the 15th they sent a detachment of gendarmes there, one of which was killed. On the same day, Charge d'Affaires of Japan in Moscow Nishi demanded that the Soviet side return the border guards to their previous positions. In response, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs B. Stomonyakov stated that not a single Soviet soldier had violated the border. Four days later, a sharp exchange of views took place between Ambassador M. Shigemitsu and People's Commissar M. Litvinov. At the initiative of the Japanese command, dozens of local residents crossed the border with letters asking the Russians to leave the Manchurian land.

Interestingly, the Soviet side of the battles near Lake Khasan unexpectedly linked with the flight of the former chief of the Far Eastern NKVD. In the wall newspaper of the Soviet embassy in Tokyo, in a note with the pathetic title "Height

Zaozernaya is a native Russian land", the contents of which became known to a Japanese agent, it was stated that the Japanese press, in connection with the "Lyushkov case", fanned a hysterical and deceitful propaganda campaign and that the Soviet Union was forced to strengthen its Far Eastern borders. But it was just a propaganda ploy - not for the general public, but for diplomats and the military. In fact, as we remember, the Far Eastern Front was formed a few days before Lyushkov's escape and a month before the first shots were fired at Zaozernaya.

In the meantime, Blucher intervened in the matter, sending his commission to Zaozernaya ... Later, in a secret order of the People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov dated August 31, 1938, following the results of the Khasan battles, in this obvious denunciation of Blucher, it was said indignantly:

"The leadership of the commander of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front, Marshal Blucher, during the period of hostilities near Lake Khasan was completely unsatisfactory and bordered on conscious defeatism. All his behavior during the time preceding the hostilities, and during the battles themselves, was a combination of duplicity, indiscipline and sabotage of the armed rebuff to the Japanese troops who had seized part of our territory. Knowing in advance about the upcoming Japanese provocation (or rather, the Soviet one. - B.S.) and about the government decisions on this matter, announced by Comrade. Litvinov to Ambassador Shigemitsu, having received a directive from the People's Commissar of Defense on July 22 to put the entire front on alert, comrade. Blucher limited himself to issuing appropriate orders and did nothing to check the preparation of troops to repulse the enemy and did not take real measures to support the border guards with field troops. Instead, on July 24, quite unexpectedly, he questioned the legality of the actions of our border guards near Lake Khasan. Secretly from a member of the Military Council comrade. Mazepov, his chief of staff comrade. Stern, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Comrade. Mekhlis and Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs comrade. Frinovsky, who were at that time in Khabarovsk (it was by no means accidental that they all arrived there even before the start of the fighting. - B.S), comrade. Blucher sent a commission to

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

height Zaozernaya and without the participation of the chief of the border station, he investigated the actions of our border guards. The commission created in such a suspicious manner discovered a "violation" by our border guards of the Manchurian border by 3 meters and, therefore, "established" our "guilty" in the outbreak of the conflict on Lake Khasan. In view of this Com. Blucher sends a telegram to the People's Commissar of Defense about this alleged violation of the Manchurian border by us and demands the immediate arrest of the head of the border station and other "culprits in provoking the conflict" with the Japanese. This telegram was sent to Com. Blucher also secretly from the comrades listed above. Even after instructions from the government to stop fussing with all sorts of commissions and investigations and on the exact implementation of the decisions of the Soviet government and the orders of the people's commissar of defense comrade. Blucher does not change his defeatist position and continues to sabotage the organization of an armed rebuff to the Japanese.

On July 25, the day after the arrival of the Blucher commission, the head of the troops of the Far Eastern border district, Sokolov, reprimanded his subordinate, the head of the Posyetsky border

Grebennik's detachment:

- Where does it say that it is necessary to allow command personnel who are not related to the protection of the border to the border line? Why don't you follow the order to prevent access to the border without permission? ... You don't follow the order, and the chief of staff of the army fixes one trench behind the border line, there are barbed wire. Why does it differ from your scheme, signed by Alekseev (head of staff of the Posyet border detachment. - B.S)?

"The equipment of the height was carried out at night," Grebennik justified himself uncertainly.

- Why do your reports do not agree with the scheme - is it true or not? Sokolov did not let up.

"After checking the device with a theodolite, there were small errors," the head of the Posyet border detachment admitted. - Now this error is corrected.

- Has the four-meter border strip been taken into account? - inquired the chief of the border guards of the Far East.

- Accounted for, - assured Grebennik.

- So, the trench and the wire are behind the four-meter border strip on the adjacent side - Sokolov specified.

- It is difficult to determine the trench, - the commander of the border detachment explained, - according to the instruments, allegedly part of the trench went a few centimeters forward, and the wire tripper (probably, the border guard strongly respected the drink of the same name in common parlance. - B.S.) is located next to the trench, at the height of the grass. We repeat, we are correcting this error now ...

If we translate this evasive dialogue into the language of logic, it becomes clear that there was a violation of the border by the Soviet border guards, but they preferred to call it a mistake related to the imperfection of geodetic instruments. And Kuzma Evdokimovich Grebennik seems to be understandable. More recently, Lyushkov went to Manchuria in his sector, and then a commission sent by Blucher accuses the poor fellow of "provoking a conflict with the Japanese," and the formidable Far Eastern marshal himself demands his arrest. It is unlikely, of course, that the commander sent fighters to the crest of Zaozernaya on his own initiative. And the fatal shot at the Japanese gendarme, I think, was not at all accidental. But what exactly is it in case

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@09

what they would make the main and only culprit of the incident - the head of the Posyet border detachment understood very well. And Stalin decided to go to the end and show the Japanese the power of the Red Army.

The trouble is that the Red Army soldiers were not very good at fighting. In the final order of Voroshilov, this was stated quite frankly:

"The culprits for these major shortcomings and for the excessive losses we suffered in a relatively small combat clash

are the commanders, commissars and chiefs of all degrees of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front and, first of all, the commander of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front, Marshal Blucher. Instead of honestly devoting all his strength to the cause of eliminating sabotage and combat training of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front and truthfully informing the party and the Main Military Council about the shortcomings in the life of the troops of the front, comrade. Blucher systematically, from year to year, covered up his deliberately poor work and inactivity with reports of successes, the growth of the combat training of the front and its general prosperous state. In the same spirit, he made a report for many hours at a meeting of the Main Military Council on May 28-31, 1938, in which he hid the true state of the troops of the Far Eastern Front and argued that the troops of the front were well trained and combat-ready in all respects.

Numerous enemies of the people who sat next to Blucher skillfully hid behind his back, carrying out their criminal work to disorganize and disintegrate the troops of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front. But even after the exposure and removal from the army of traitors and spies, comrade. Blucher failed or did not want to really realize the cleansing of the front from the enemies of the people. Under the flag of special vigilance, contrary to the instructions of the Main Military Council and the People's Commissar, hundreds of posts of unit and formation chiefs were left unfilled, thus depriving military units of leaders, leaving staffs without employees incapable of performing their tasks. This position of comrade. Blucher explained by the absence of people (which does not correspond to the truth) and thereby cultivated indiscriminate distrust of all the command and command personnel of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front.

As for combat training in the Voroshilov order, everything was true. One of the participants in the battles near Lake Khasan S. Sharonov recalled:

"Before the Khasan events, I served in the 120th Infantry Regiment of the 40th Infantry Division. There was little combat training. In 1937-1938, many commanders were taken away. The command of the division was completely beheaded: commander Vasnetsov, commissar Rudenko, chief of staff Stahl, chief of artillery, chief medical officer and his wife, a medical officer, were arrested. In the shelf - the same picture. We, ordinary fighters, sometimes did not know who to believe. They were drawn only to the polygruk Matveev, a real Bolshevik, still of the Red Guard temper. He was also taken away, and then returned. We asked him when will we be throwing live grenades, all wooden and wooden? You could ask him such questions, we knew. And Matveev answered: "To throw a grenade for you, but for the state it will cost a cow." He thought about it and added: "Yes ... you will still fight ..." ""

We had to fight very soon. Repression, of course, weakened the combat capability of the Far Eastern Army. Even a year before Khasan, when the Main Military Council was convened after the arrest of Tukhachevsky and several other high-ranking military men, Stalin seemed to have no complaints against Blucher. Giving a big speech on June 2, 1937, Joseph

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services6.

Vissarionovich even defended him against the accusations made by the "conspirators":

"... They report (to their German masters, according to Stalin. - B.S.) that we have such and such command posts occupied, we ourselves occupy large command posts - I, Tukhachevsky, and he, Uborevich, and here Yakir. They demand - but what about Japan, the Far East, how? And so the campaign begins, a very serious campaign. They want to remove Blucher. And there is a candidate. Well, of course, Tukhachevsky. If not him, then who? Why withdraw? Agitation is led by Gamarnik, led by Aronshtam. So they deftly lead that they raised almost all of Blucher's entourage against him. Moreover, they convinced the leadership of the military center that it should be removed. Why, I ask, explain what's the matter? Here he is drinking. OK then. Well, what else? Here he does not get up early in the morning, does not go to the troops. What else? Outdated, does not understand new methods of work. Well, today he doesn't understand - tomorrow he will understand, the experience of the old fighter will not be lost. Look, the Central Committee faces the fact of all the filth that is being said about Blucher. Putna is bombarding us, Aronshtam is bombarding us in Moscow, Gamarnik is bombarding us. Finally, we call a meeting. When he arrives, see him. A man is a good man. We don't know him - what's the matter? Let's give him a speech - great. We check it in this order. People from the places signaled, we are convening a meeting in the hall of the Central Committee.

Of course, he is more reasonable, more experienced than any Tukhachevsky, than any Uborevich, who is an alarmist, and than any Yakir, who is no different in military affairs ... Put people in command positions who do not drink and do not know how to fight - not good ".

Vasily Konstantinovich Blucher at that meeting expressed his readiness to deal with pests in his Far East:

- Now, having returned to the troops, we will have to start by collecting a small asset, because the troops say more, and less, and not in the right way. In a word, you need to tell the troops what the matter is.

- That is, to count who is arrested? - ironically remarked Stalin.

- No, not quite like that, - Blucher was embarrassed.

And Iosif Vissarionovich explained what exactly should be told to subordinates about the "Tukhachevsky conspiracy":

- If I were you, being the commander of the OKDVA, I would do this: I would gather the highest staff and report to them in detail. And then, too, in my presence, I would have gathered lower command staff and explained more briefly, not intelligibly enough for them to understand that the enemy had crept into our army, he wanted to undermine our power, that they were hired people of our enemies, the Japanese and Germans. We are clearing our army of them, do not be afraid, we will smash everyone who stands on the road into a cake. The top would say wider.

And the "good man" Blucher, together with Mekhlis and Frinovsky, undertook to eradicate the "enemies of the people" in the Special Far East so zealously that by the beginning of the conflict near Lake Khasan, many command positions were vacant. The marshal was afraid to replace them with new people: what if tomorrow they too become "hired people" of our enemies - the Japanese? It is not surprising that the outcome of the battles near the Zaozernaya and Bezymyannaya hills turned out to be tragically not in favor of the Soviet troops.

How did events develop on the Soviet-Manchurian border? On July 29, the Japanese attacked Bezymyannaya Hill on Soviet territory, killing five border guards. The approaching company of the Red Army forced them

retreat. On July 31, Japanese troops occupied Zaozernaya, as well as neighboring

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ "

hill - Nameless, displacing Soviet border posts from them. Soviet attacks on the heights captured by the Japanese began only on August 2, when the enemy had already managed to dig in and equip firing positions. Blucher, who still hoped for a peaceful settlement of the incident, was blamed for the delay. On August 1, 1938, an angry conversation took place over a direct wire between Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov with Blucher. Stalin was outraged:

- Tell me, Blucher, why is the order of the People's Commissar of Defense to bombard our entire territory occupied by the Japanese, including the Zaozernaya height, with aircraft?

- I report, - answered Blucher. - Aviation is ready to take off. Departure delayed due to adverse weather conditions. Right this minute Rychagov (commander of the Air Force of the Far Eastern Front. - B. S.) ordered, regardless of anything, to raise aircraft into the air and attack ... Aviation is now rising into the air, but I'm afraid that in this bombardment we, apparently, will inevitably we will touch both our units and Korean villages.

Stalin was not worried about the possible losses of his troops from the actions of his own aviation, and even more so the victims among some Koreans there, who, from the Soviet side of the border, all the same Lyushkov quite recently, as potential Japanese spies, safely deported to Central Asia. And he asked menacingly:

- Tell me, Comrade Blucher, honestly, do you have a desire to really fight the Japanese? If you do not have such a desire, say it directly, as befits a communist; and if there is a desire, I would think that you should go to the place immediately. I do not understand your fear of bombarding the Korean population, as well as the fear that the aviation will not be able to fulfill its duty due to the fog. Who forbade you not to offend the Korean population in the conditions of a military skirmish with the Japanese? ... What does some kind of cloudiness mean for Bolshevik aviation if it really wants to defend the honor of its Motherland. Waiting for an answer.

Blucher had no choice but to reluctantly report:

- Aviation ordered to rise, and the first group will rise into the air at eleven twenty - fighters. Rychagov promises to have attacking aircraft at fourteen o'clock. Me and Mazepov in an hour and a half, and if Bryandinskiy flies earlier, we'll fly to Voroshilov together. We accept your instructions for execution and carry them out with Bolshevik precision.

To hell with it, with the fog! There are no fortresses that the Bolsheviks could not take! And it does not matter that several planes may crash, and bombs will fall on the positions of the Red Army. If only to fulfill Stalin's order, otherwise the marshal would certainly not be blown off his head.

The Soviet offensive, launched on August 2, bogged down. Artilleryman S. Sharonov recalled:

"By the beginning of the fighting, I served as the commander of an anti-tank battery gun.

We were attached to the 7th company of the 3rd battalion of the 120th rifle regiment. True, the guns were not used for their intended purpose: the Japanese did not use tanks. Our division advanced from the south in the direction of the hills of Machine Gun and Zaozernaya in a narrow corridor (in some places its width did not exceed 200 meters) between the lake and the border. The big difficulty was that it was strictly forbidden to shoot across the border and cross it. The density in this corridor was terrible, the soldiers went rampart after rampart. I saw it well from my position ... A lot was killed there. From our company, for example, 17 people survived ... "

The same is said by Captain Storozhenko, the battalion commander,

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @
3

who attacked Zaozernaya from the south:

"In front of us lay a space of 150 meters, completely braided with wire and under crossfire. Our units, advancing through the northern approach to Bezmyannaya, found themselves in the same situation ... We could have dealt with the presumptuous enemy much faster if we had violated the border and captured the trenches, bypassing them along the Manchurian territory (in the Khasan region, the borders of three countries converged: the USSR , Manchuria and Korea. - B. S). But our units exactly followed the order of the command and acted within their territory ... "

Stalin and Voroshilov wanted to demonstrate to the world the strength of the Red Army, counting on a quick and bloodless victory without starting a war with Japan. So they ordered not to cross outside the Zaozernaya border. But the mini-blitzkrieg failed. The Japanese, seeing themselves as winners, offered to settle the dispute amicably and return to the positions that the parties held on the morning of July 11 - before the incident. On August 4, Shigemitsu conveyed these proposals to Litvinov. However, the Soviet People's Commissar stated: "By restoring the situation, I meant the situation that existed until July 29, i.e. until the date when the Japanese troops crossed the border and began to occupy the Bezmyannaya and Zaozernaya heights.

The next day, Voroshilov sent a directive to Blucher and his chief of staff, Grigory Mikhailovich Stern, where he allowed a new attack on Zaozernaya to use a detour from the flanks already across the state border line. The leadership of the operation was now entrusted to Stern. Later, Grigory Mikhailovich, in order to justify the heavy losses, wrote in Pravda: "The possibility ... of any kind of maneuver for the Red Army units was completely absent ... It was possible to attack only ... directly in the forehead of the Japanese positions" Of course, he kept silent about permission to invade Manchurian territory to bypass enemy positions: in Soviet times, this circumstance was the strictest state secret.

This is how the new offensive of the Soviet troops is characterized in the "Brief Description of the Khasan Events", compiled by the headquarters of the border and internal troops of the Far Eastern border district:

"Since the issue of invading enemy territory was positively resolved, the right flank of the advancing units of the 32nd Infantry Division captured the Chernaya height, and the left flank of the 40th

rifle division - Homoku (the last - in the Manchurian territory. - B.S.). Due to bad weather, the aircraft's departure was delayed, and the infantry offensive actually began at about 17:00. Around midnight, units of the 118th Infantry Regiment of the 32nd Infantry Division reached the southern part of the ridge of the Zaozernaya height and hoisted a red flag on it ... The enemy managed to keep the northern part of the ridge of the Zaozernaya height and the ridge of the Bezmyannaya height ... "

In fact, as the scheme preserved in the archive proves, the flag was hoisted not at the top of Zaozernaya, but several tens of meters lower, on the southern slope of the hill. Before the armistice, the Soviet troops failed to take any of the heights, although the attacks continued on the 7th and 8th. After the end of the fighting, Lieutenant of the 95th Infantry Regiment Kulikov told the commission of the People's Commissariat of Defense: "On August 8, units of the 95th joint venture launched an attack on the defending enemy on the heights of Chernaya and Bezmyannaya, but those were not taken by our units. The heights are occupied after the armistice, i.e. 11 or 12

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@4

August night. Until the moment of the truce, the Chernaya and Bezmyannaya heights were occupied by Japanese troops ... "And the Japanese remained on the machine-gun and Bogomolnaya heights located on Soviet territory until August 15.

And with Zaozernaya, the military got embarrassed. Commissar of the 118th Infantry Regiment N. Bondarenko testified: "When occupying the Zaozernaya height, I told the radio operator ... to go down and transmit either by radio or by telephone to the headquarters of the 40th division that the Zaozernaya height was occupied by units of our divisions. Whether it was transmitted by the radio operator to the division headquarters, I Don't know..."

The commissioner hesitated. False information was transmitted and went for a walk through the authorities right up to Moscow itself. On August 8, Izvestia published a message from the headquarters of the 1st (Primorsky) Army: "Soviet units ... cleared our territory of the remnants of Japanese troops, firmly occupying our border points." Two days later, an equally fantastic communiqué appeared: "On August 9, Japanese troops again launched a series of attacks on the Zaozernaya height, occupied by our troops. Japanese troops were driven back with heavy losses for them ... "

But the Chekists refuted the military in secret reports. On August 14, state security lieutenant Chulichkov reported: "In fact, the Zaozernaya height was not taken completely, but only the southeastern slopes ... the crest of the northern part of the height and its northeastern slopes were in the hands of the Japanese ... The Japanese were on the northern part of the Zaozernaya ridge from August 6 to August 13 and occupied the command points of the heights ... "And the next day, Chulichkov's colleague Althausen informed Frinovsky:" Yesterday, August 14, Stern received the text of your telegram to Comrade Yezhov on the issue of disinformation by a shtakor in the occupation of Zaozernaya and Bezmyannaya heights. Already at the beginning of the reception of the text of the telegram, Stern called me to the telegraph office and attacked me to the point of insults. Then he reported to Comrade Voroshilov that I was always hostile to the actions of the corps (the attacking Bezmyannaya and Zaozernaya hills, the 40th and 32nd rifle divisions and the 2nd mechanized brigades were merged into the 39th rifle corps, commanded by Stern - B.S.) and

raised the issue of dismissing (the submitter of the incorrect telegram from office. -B.S) ...
"

The conclusions of the Chekists were fully confirmed by the joint Soviet-Japanese commission, which visited Zaozernaya on the morning of the 12th, the day after the armistice was concluded. The military and diplomats who were part of the commission stated that "in view of the special situation that has arisen in the northern part of the ridge of the Zaozernaya height, which is expressed in excessive convergence - up to five meters - of parts of both sides", it is necessary to come to the following agreement: "... From 20 hours On August 12, both the main forces of the Japanese army and the main forces of the Red Army in the northern part of the crest of the Zaozernaya height should be withdrawn no closer than 80 meters from the crest ... "In fact, the parties returned to the situation on August 11, leaving the crest of the hill as a kind of neutral zone . The Japanese, without any disputes, cleared the Soviet hills Bezmyannaya and Machine-gun, which they did not pretend to retain.

Soviet losses amounted to 792 people killed and 2752 wounded, Japanese - 525 and 913, respectively, that is, 2-3 times less. In the order of Voroshilov, following the results of the Khasan battles, it was rightly noted: "Combat training of troops, headquarters and command and command personnel of the front

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@5

turned out to be unacceptably low. The military units were pulled apart and unfit for combat; the supply of military units is not organized. It was found that the Far Eastern Theater was poorly prepared for war (roads, bridges, communications) ... "The same was said at the meeting of the command and political staff of the Posyet border detachment, and not only about the border guards, but also about the field troops of the Red Army. According to the notes of Brigadier Commissar K.F. Telegin, who was present at the meeting, the main reasons for the failures were that the troops "stretched out along the front, and during the battle they grouped in unequipped positions ... Communication was only telephone, after losing it, a lot of manpower was used up ... There was no coordination between divisions, they even fired at their tanks... The military commissar of the 40th rifle division was afraid to take responsibility for mobilizing floating units to throw cargo to the front ("what if I rip off Putin?")... The district sent grenades F- 1, but they could not use them ... At first, the field units worked without a code ... The field units from Novaya Derevnaya to Zaozernaya abandoned satchels, machine guns ... They neglected bayonet fighting ... They did not engage in combat training, because they turned into economic commanders . We harvest hay, firewood, vegetables, we carry out construction, we wash clothes ... "

Blucher's song was sung. At the Main Military Council at the end of August, he was removed from his post, arrested on October 22, and on November 9, the marshal died. According to the official version - from "blockage of the pulmonary arteries by a thrombus", according to the unofficial and, as it seems, closer to the truth - from severe beatings. Marshal was accused of having links with the right-wing Trotskyist organization, that is, with Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda and their associates, convicted and shot on false charges back in March 1938, as well as spying for Japan. In the first guilt, Vasily Konstantinovich was forced to confess by beatings, in the second - they did not have time: he died.

It is curious that the Khasan events did not survive their formal

the culprit is Vasily Venevitin, head of the engineering service of the Posyetsky border detachment. On August 8, 1938, he was shot by a Red Army soldier by mistake due to a mess with passwords: either Venevitin gave the old password, or they forgot to tell the soldier a new one. Was this death so accidental? Haven't Frinovsky's people tried to remove an undesirable witness who could ever tell about the one who ordered him to shoot at the Japanese gendarmes?

There is no doubt that if Lyushkov had been in Moscow at the time of the Khasan events, working in the central apparatus of the NKVD, then after the arrest of Blucher, he would certainly have followed him. Genrikh Samoilovich could simply be accused of either complicity in a conspiracy, or loss of vigilance. So he escaped just in time.

Well, while in Tokyo, Lyushkov predicted the arrest of Blucher, his reasons very accurately:

"A group of traitors was at the headquarters of the Far Eastern Army and included such people close to Blucher as Jan Pokus, Gulin, Vasnetsov, Kropachev and others. They tried to involve Blucher in politically dangerous conversations. Blucher, without our permission, showed them the confessions of the arrested conspirators. After his arrest, Gulin told me that after Pokus was recalled to Moscow, Blucher, drinking with him, Gulin, scolded the NKVD for the arrests, and also scolded Voroshilov, Lazar Kaganovich and others. Blucher admitted to Gulin that before Rykov was eliminated, he was associated with him and often received from that letter that "the rightists want to see him, Blucher, at the head of the Red Army." I think the ego is pretty

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@6

an indicative fact for clarifying the true feelings of Blucher ... In general, Blucher loves power very much. He is no longer satisfied with the role he plays in the Far East, he wants more. He considers himself superior to Voroshilov. It is politically doubtful that he is satisfied with the overall situation, although he is very cautious. In the army, he is more popular than Voroshilov. Blucher does not like military commissars and military councils, which limit his right to give orders.

At the 11th Party Congress in March 1939, Stalin touched upon the Khasan battles: "What, for example, are the events at Lake Khasan talking about, if not because the cleansing of Soviet organizations from spies, murderers, pests is the surest means of strengthening them? "Here Iosif Vissarionovich used his old formulation with a new goal. He hoped that by quickly defeating the Japanese on Zaozernaya and Bezymyannaya, the Red Army would demonstrate to the whole world that the repressions of 1937-1938 had not weakened, but strengthened its power. It turned out to be quite the opposite. The world guessed that the Soviet armed forces were not at all as powerful and invincible as Soviet propaganda represented. Inside the country, of course, newspapers and radio were able to present the defeat at Khasan as a victory, but Stalin, of course, had to keep silent at the congress about the fact that after the "successful defeat of the Japanese invaders" the commander of the Far Eastern Army was arrested - and beaten to death during the investigation. The process of "strengthening" the Red Army through repression continued until the beginning of the Great Patriotic War.

What did Lyushkov do in a foreign land? First of all, of course,

revealed to the Japanese all the Soviet secrets that he knew. And not only those that were associated with the assassination of Kirov and the political trials and purges of the 1930s. Lyushkov wrote in his diary which grouping of the Red Army is located in the Far East:

"Stalin's adventurous foreign policy also has an impact on Soviet-Japanese relations. A propaganda campaign is being waged inside the country to convince the people that Japan is preparing an attack on the USSR. Stalin provides military assistance to Chiang Kai-shek, counting on their mutual exhaustion as Japan gets bogged down in the war with China, in order to then bring down a blow on both countries with the forces of the Far Eastern Army and the Pacific Fleet. An army of about 270 thousand people (20 divisions) is concentrated in the Far East. If we add to them the Trans-Baikal army and the troops of the NKVD, then 400 thousand people and about 2 thousand aircraft are concentrated to the east of Lake Baikal. More than 90 large and small submarines are based in the ports of Vladivostok and Nakhodka. The obvious goal of Stalin is to gradually subdue the weakening China to his influence ... Large-scale repressions affected the command staff of the Red Army. Many army commanders, commanders, division commanders and brigade commanders were arrested. Just as arrests among civilians contributed to a feeling of psychological depression among the population, arrests in the army negatively affected its morale, discipline and level of combat readiness. However, purges for Stalin are not only a means of eliminating the "politically unreliable", but also a way to create an obedient army. And this is an important link in the preparation for war."

However, in relation to the military power of the USSR in the Far East, the Japanese War Ministry considered Lyushkov only as a secondary informant. Here, the Japanese relied more on artillery major Frantyamar Frantsevich, who had defected two weeks earlier than Genrikh Samoylovich, on May 29, 1938, from the territory

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

Mongolia. To escape, Frantsevich, an officer of the headquarters of the 36th motorized infantry division, used a car. The major was still a military specialist and could give information about the tactics, weapons and organizational structure of the Far Eastern Army - on the main issues, about which Lyushkov had only the most general idea.

But for the Japanese, Lyushkov's data on the work of the NKVD intelligence was important. He claimed:

"Intelligence activities against Japan are independently conducted by the NKVD, the Red Army, and the CPSU (b). For these purposes, the embassy and trade mission of the USSR in Tokyo are actively used. Intelligence is carried out by embassy employees with low ranks. Citizens of other countries, in particular, Germany and the United States, living in Japan are also widely used. Members of the Communist Party of Germany willingly help Soviet intelligence. Staff members of the NKVD are sent to Japan as the wives of diplomats. In particular, the wife of the Soviet ambassador to Tokyo, Smetanin, is an NKVD agent.

The main channels for the penetration of Soviet agents into Japan are Shanghai and the United States, and documents of citizens of third countries are often used. As a rule, a scout before arriving in the country

assignment has been engaged in commerce or other activities in another country for several years. Communication is maintained through couriers or through third countries. Radio transmitters are intended primarily for use in wartime. There is no illegal station with a transmitter in Japan right now."

The former commissar of state security described the methods of work of Soviet intelligence quite reliably, with knowledge of the matter. After all, in the early 1930s he himself was on an illegal mission in Germany. But Lyushkov clearly lacked specific knowledge. Obviously, he was in charge of only a small undercover fry in Manchukuo. She was paid in unreliable Manchurian yuan. Really serious agents closed in on Moscow. That is why, in particular, Heinrich Samoilovich did not know anything about the group of Richard Sorge in Tokyo, which was not only included in the highest Japanese spheres, but also had a radio transmitter. In addition, Sorge was first an agent of the Comintern, and then worked for the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army, and an NKVD officer of the rank of Lyushkov could hardly have known about the existence of this agent. So about the absence of illegal Soviet residency in Japan, Lyushkov unwittingly misinformed his new masters.

For such a valuable defector, a struggle immediately began between the headquarters of the most powerful Kwantung Army stationed in Manchukuo and the authorities in Tokyo. The command of the Kwantung Army felt itself to a large extent independent of the War Ministry and the Imperial General Staff. However, the center prevailed, and Lyushkov was sent to Japan through Korea. There, his move provided the headquarters of the Japanese Korean Army, more loyal to Tokyo. The intelligence agencies of the Kwantung Army were able only once to interrogate the former chief of the Far Eastern NKVD. During this interrogation, on the day of the escape, Lyushkov, in particular, stated that he had left the USSR out of fear of dying in one of the following "purges". He did not say a word about his intention to organize an assassination attempt on the Soviet leader. Meanwhile, a few decades later, Genrikh Samoylovich was credited with this daring plan.

In the book of the Japanese journalist Yoshiaki Hiyama "Japanese plans to assassinate Stalin" it is stated that after the start of the military conflict near Lake Khasan, Russians who settled in Manchuria

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@8

white emigrants, the Japanese managed to form a detachment of terrorists, whose task was to kill Stalin. To do this, they had to cross the Turkish border one by one and get to Sochi, where Stalin was resting at that time. There, through a complex system of underground communications, the militants were to penetrate the Matsesta pavilion just at the time when Iosif Vissarionovich would take mud baths there, and finish him off. The plan was allegedly developed by Lyushkov. According to Khiyama, Genrikh Samoilovich knew perfectly both Stalin's security system and the underground passages of the Matsesta complex, since the ranype worked in the central apparatus of the NKVD.

Despite careful preparations, the operation failed. All the terrorists were captured while crossing the Soviet-Turkish border. Moscow was warned in advance about the impending assassination by agent Boris Bzhemansky, nicknamed Leo, who served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Manchukuo. He also thwarted another plan, developed on a tip

Lyushkov. On the eve of May 1, 1939, Japanese agents were supposed to carry a powerful mine into the Mausoleum. Its clock mechanism was set at 10 am, when the entire Soviet leadership was supposed to be on the podium of the Mausoleum. But again the terrorists were intercepted and rendered harmless at the border.

The fantasticness of all these ridiculous projects was pointed out by the former officer of Stalin's security, Alexei Rybin:

"Did the terrorists in Matsesta have the opportunity to shoot Stalin with explosive bullets? No. The internal guard consisted of about two hundred employees. The outer ring in the forest area was a detachment of border guards ... The tail escort group was armed with machine guns even before the war ...

There were more than fifty other employees on Malaya Matsesta itself. We appeared there three hours before Stalin's arrival and subjected everything to a check, right down to the underground utilities. The almost deserted territory of Matsesta and the forest adjacent to it were combed. All suspicious persons were checked and, if necessary, detained. How, with such a tight guard, could even our nosy opposition arrange an assassination attempt? And it's not even worth talking about the Japanese ... "I'll add on my own that it remains a complete mystery, why did the Japanese special services suddenly need to eliminate the leader of a neighboring state so urgently? Was it all the same in Tokyo who would sit on the kingdom in the Kremlin: Stalin or Molotov, Kaganovich or Mikoyan? Were the Japanese so naive that they believed that with the death of the leader, the Soviet Union would enter a period of unrest and disintegrate? After all, the events associated with the illness and death of Lenin proved that, despite the struggle for power between members of the Politburo, there were no dramatic changes in the external position of the Soviets, just as there was no instability inside the country. And why was it necessary to "shine" Lyushkov if he played a key role in such an unheard-of and, of course, secret matter as the assassination attempt on Stalin? Indeed, in Moscow, in the first days after the disappearance of the head of the Far Eastern NKVD, they were not at all sure that he had managed to safely reach the Manchurian or Korean border. Meanwhile, already on July 1, 1938, Japanese journalists were informed about Lyushkov's escape, and on July 13, the day after the Soviet border guards occupied the Zaozernaya hill, his press conference was held in Tokyo with the participation of foreign journalists. Richard Sorge, who represented the German

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fighting@®9

Frankfurter Zeitung. He commented on the motives for the escape: "Lyushkov defected not because he was dissatisfied with the actions of the Soviet leadership or did something illegal, but because he was afraid of becoming a victim of the purges that swept through the GPU."

All this could only further alarm the Soviet side. And if Lyushkov really knew the features of the Stalinist guard, the NKVD would immediately try to make changes to its system. And how was it possible in such a short period of time, one and a half to two months, to have time not only to develop an assassination plan, but also to select volunteer suicide bombers (they had practically no plans to survive even if they were successful)? And not only pick up, but also issue them Turkish and other visas and through

several borders to transfer a detachment from Manchuria to the Black Sea coast? Most importantly, Lyushkov never worked in Stalin's guard and had no idea about its system, as well as about the underground communications of Matsesta.

What was the authentic biography of the defector?

Heinrich Samoylovich was born in 1900 in Odessa into a Jewish family. His father was a poor tailor. Heinrich graduated from a b-class real school, and then attended evening general education courses. Under the influence of his older brother, who was connected with the Bolshevik underground, in 1917 he participated in the revolution in the ranks of the fighting squad, became a member of the Odessa Council and in 1918 fought against the Austro-German invaders, and after the occupation of Odessa by the troops of the Central Powers, he remained in the city underground. In February 1919, when the French were already in Odessa, Lyushkov was arrested. However, Heinrich Samoylovich managed to escape and get to Yekaterinoslav, occupied by the Reds. In March, he became a political fighter in the Crimean Soviet regiment of the Red Army, and in April he was sent to the Central Courses of the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs of Ukraine in Kyiv. Here, in July, a 19-year-old cadet joined the Communist Party. After completing the course, Heinrich Samoylovich fought against the Petlyura detachments advancing on Kyiv, and then worked as an assistant to the military organizer of the Kyiv provincial committee. At the end of August, Soviet troops left Kyiv. Together with other Soviet workers, Lyushkov was evacuated to Bryansk, from where he was sent to political work in the 1st separate rifle brigade of the 14th army. Then he had to fight against Denikin and the Poles.

Already at the age of 20, Lyushkov became the head of the political department of the brigade, but was soon sent to a different front of work - to the Che Ka. In September 1920, Heinrich Samoylovich was appointed authorized by the Special Department of the 57th Infantry Division. After the end of the civil war, he entered the Odessa Institute of the Humanities, but failed to complete his education. In November 1921, Lyushkov was sent to work in the Odessa ChK. Then he had to serve in the district departments of the ChK in Tiraspol, Voznesensk, Kamenetz-Podolsk and Pervomaisk. At the end of 1924, the young Chekist was entrusted to head the Proskurov district department of the GPU. A year later, he was transferred to Kharkov, to the central office of the OGPU of Ukraine. Here, Lyushkov, who had extensive experience working with secret agents, or informers, was appointed head of the information and information department. In 1926, he, as stated in his official description, "groped for a terrorist group that was preparing an attempt on the life of the Chairman of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, comrade. Petrovsky". So our hero had to prevent assassination attempts rather than organize them himself.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services
@: 9

Further, Lyushkov's path lay in Germany. There Heinrich Samoylovich discovered an excellent knowledge of German and outstanding qualities of a scout. His report on the Junkers aircraft factories, presented in 1930, was approved by Stalin himself. Returning back to Ukraine, Lyushkov, the future fighter against the anti-people regime, became the head of the secret political department of the Ukrainian GPU, into which the former information and information department was transformed. In August 1931, Lyushkov passed the next step in the service

hierarchy, becoming deputy head of the secret political department of the allied GPU. This is where collectivization began. Heinrich Samoylovich had to participate in its implementation of the people's Ukraine and the neighboring North Caucasus. Later, Lyushkov told the Japanese how the KGB suppressed spontaneous riots of hungry peasants who tried to find salvation from the famine caused by collectivization in the then capital of Ukraine. Directives came from Moscow demanding tough measures against the rebels. Lyushkov had to visit recalcitrant villages with punitive expeditions. He became convinced that it was by no means the kulaks and other "anti-Soviet elements", as Soviet propaganda claimed, that pushed the peasants to revolt. The reason was different: the policy of the center, brought to the point of absurdity on the ground, left the peasants no chance of survival. In the North Caucasus, in the Cossack and mountain regions, things even came to full-scale hostilities with the use of artillery. Stalin, according to Lyushkov, with his inherent resourcefulness in the article "Dizziness from Success" shifted all the blame for the "excesses" - wild inhumanity - to local leaders.

In the summer of 1932, Lyushkov was included in the commission headed by Kaganovich, which inspected the agricultural regions of the North Caucasus. From Rostov, Genrikh Samoylovich went to the Don village of Tikhoretskaya, which was rich in the past. He was shocked by the poverty of the collective farmers. Crowds of peasants at railway stations begged for a piece of bread from the passengers of passing trains. From conversations with the Cossacks and from the reports of the NKVD, Lyushkov concluded that the famine was caused not by the sabotage of the kulaks, but by the policy of the state, which takes away the last bread in a lean year. But when he tried to tell Kaganovich about this, Lazar Moiseevich replied that the peasants themselves were to blame, and if two or three hundred of them died, then it would be a good lesson for others: do not oppose the collective farms. A state of emergency was introduced in the Cossack villages, and they were isolated from the rest of the country. Chekists did not have time to dig graves. Those who died of starvation had to be dumped into old wells and covered with earth. Since the events of collectivization did not affect Lyushkov's career in any way, it can be concluded that his opposition did not go beyond timid talk (if not invented at all retroactively). Surely Heinrich Samoylovich, together with others, crushed peasant uprisings and established "sanitary cordons" around the rebellious villages.

In December 1934, Lyushkov, as I have already said, took part in the investigation into the murder of Kirov. However, his functions included studying the political background of the crime, and by no means studying the personal protection system of the Leningrad party leader. Stalin once again noticed the quick-witted Chekist, who actively participated in the "revealing" of the required "Trotskyist-Zinovievist" conspiracy. In August 1936, Lyushkov became head of the NKVD Directorate for the Azov-Chernomorsky Territory and moved to Rostov-on-Don, where he remained until July 1937. At that time, the Chekists of the Don and Kuban really turned out to be under his command, and

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@Z.

hence, those who worked in Matsesta. But it is absolutely unbelievable that Genrikh Samoylovich personally had to examine the underground communications of the famous hospital. This is not a general matter. It can, of course, be assumed that even then he planned an escape and, just in case, took the plan of the Matsesta dungeons: maybe it will come in handy. However, then it remains a mystery why Georgy Samoilovich then regularly

dragged on for a whole year in the Far East, deported Koreans and Chinese, destroyed "enemies of the people"? In January 1938, People's Commissar Yezhov set the example of the "Stakhanovist" Lyushkov, who repressed as many as 70 thousand "counter-revolutionaries" - more than in any other territorial department of the NKVD. And why was it necessary to flee to Manchuria? If you have already decided - here it is, Türkiye, at your side.

By the way, in the inventory of things found in the Japanese archives while crossing the border, there are no plans or maps listed. The Commissar of State Security had with him only an official ID, two pistols (Mauser and Derringer systems), a Longines watch, black glasses (Lyushkov apparently had a craving for traditional spy paraphernalia), Russian cigarettes, 4153 yen in Japanese, Korean and Manchurian currency, obviously borrowed from the intelligence fund, 160 rubles, the Order of Lenin and two more awards, a photograph of his wife, a telegram and several documents in Russian.

How Lyushkov behaved in Rostov - you can learn about this from the book "Empire of Fear", written by another KGB defector Vladimir Petrov, who in 1954 "choosed freedom" in Australia. In 1949, one of the Rostov Chekists told Petrov how Lyushkov scolded the leadership of the Azov-Chernomorsky NKVD for not hunting for "enemies of the people." And he warned menacingly: "The enemies of the people in this room are here, here and here." And then he ordered the arrest of several people from among those present.

Heinrich Samoylovich was forced to flee by the news of the arrest in April 1938 of the former head of the Ukrainian Chekists, Israel Moiseevich Leplevsky, who greatly contributed to Lyushkov's career. The arrest in May of one of Lyushkov's deputies M.A. Kagan, who was suddenly summoned to Moscow, suggested to Genrikh Samoylovich that his time at liberty in this world was running out. What happened next - we know.

Lyushkov's translator in Japan told a reporter for the Nichi-Nichi Shimbun newspaper in August 1938:

"This is a very insightful and subtle general in his judgments, who loves his homeland and his people no less than we love our country. Needless to say, the immediate reason for his flight was the desire to escape from Stalin and take revenge on him. But Lyushkov also wanted to free his beloved people from the hands of an enraged tyrant and save 180 million people from bloody horror and false politics. He also wanted to destroy the Comintern, but not the people, and bring happiness to the people. I don't think any of the "big shots" will have a chance to escape to Japan in the near future. If this does happen, Blucher will become such a defector.

Here we clearly have a quotation from Lyushkov. As for Blucher, the former commissar of state security, as I have already mentioned, seemed to be staring into the water. After inglorious battles, Hassan Vasily Konstantinovich was arrested. But he did not live to see the trial: he died from torture during interrogations on November 9, 1938.

The translator said:

"Lyushkov, one of the prominent officials of the GPU, who took the lives of

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ "

5000 people during the year (in fact, according to Yezhov, at least 70 thousand people were repressed by Genrikh Samoilovich; however, it is unlikely that all of them were shot. - B.S.), faced an insoluble problem when it was his turn to become the 5001st victim of the purge. After all, he believed so strongly in communist theory. "Under the rule of the communist party, politics will never be directed towards achieving universal happiness," Lyushkov now says. When we checked into the hotel, he remarked, "Japanese cities are clean, the scenery is beautiful, and the roads are even. Why are your people so rich that they can freely buy the things they need. Comparing the fate that has fallen to me and the bright building of your country, I feel as if I have awakened from an 18-year-old bad dream. At this moment, Lyushkov burst into tears. I hugged him and shed tears too.

There are descriptions of the only press conference given by Lyushkov on July 13, 1938 at the Sanno Hotel in Tokyo. Those present agreed that the former State Security Commissioner played his star role well. Dressed in a freshly made elegant summer gray suit, with a tie, clean-shaven, very lively, with a Cherry-brand cigarette in a long ivory mouthpiece, he seemed younger than his 37 years. Heinrich Samoylovich strove to look like a gentleman. Only his eyes looked at his interlocutors too piercingly - the way he used to look at his agents, from whom he listened to denunciations and to whom he gave all sorts of secret assignments. Lyushkov spoke in a low but strong voice, in a calm and rather attractive manner, gesticulated like an orator giving a speech, and looked rather cheerful. He became sad only towards the end, when it came to his family. However, he quickly pulled himself together. After the press conference ended, Lyushkov shook hands with journalists and smiled all the time.

Photographs of Lyushkov, taken on this memorable day for him, have been preserved. Before us is a handsome young man: you can't say that he is under forty. The man simply exudes the joy of life and resembles the hero of Hollywood films, the embodiment of the American dream. On the face - not a shadow of concern, much less sadness. And you won't even think that this person has thousands and thousands of ruined lives on his conscience. Did not feel, it turns out, Genrikh Samoylovich remorse. Joy filled him. How, he escaped from the trap that was already ready to snap, did not find himself, like his victims, at the blank wall of the Lubyanka basement. It's up to you, but I don't think that such a person will look for more adventures on his own head and get into an adventure with some unthinkable attempt on the all-powerful "Kremlin highlander". The main thing for Lyushkov is to hide as securely as possible, so that "our people do not catch up with me." And if Molotov or, God forbid, Yezhov comes instead of Stalin, will this change the position of the traitor commissar for the better?

Lyushkov dreamed of freedom, he wanted to get rid of the constant fear that tomorrow he would have to share the fate of those whom he himself had executed. But the Japanese ceremoniously, smiling politely, did not leave him with their attention. Heinrich Samoilovich turned into a kind of honorary prisoner. He was not handcuffed, and there was no bar on the window of the hotel room where he lived. But after all, Lyushkov did not know the language - so he almost always had to go accompanied by an interpreter. He was not allowed to leave the country. Japanese intelligence had no reason to miss their prey. Lyushkov was imprisoned for writing certificates about the leadership and structure of the NKVD, about

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services
@ Z3

foreign policy of the USSR, on the position in the top party leadership. But soon in Tokyo they decided that they had shaken everything they could out of the defector, and now he is of interest only for propaganda. However, the officers of the Russian intelligence section of the imperial army sometimes consulted with Lyushkov about the internal situation of the USSR and the organization and armament of the Red Army.

Heinrich Samoylovich dreamed of leaving for America. It can be assumed that in addition to German, he had a good command of English. However, Tokyo was by no means eager to provide a potential enemy with a valuable source of information.

In general, Lyushkov made a rather favorable impression on the Japanese. Colonel Yabe Chuta, in a conversation with the American historian Alvin Cooks, recalled:

"He was very smart and worked hard, reading and writing all the time. In case of war, Lyushkov prepared anti-Stalinist speeches and texts for leaflets. Often he worked for days without sleep. The translators were exhausted, sometimes forced to translate for Lyushkov up to 40 handwritten pages a day. The defector had no other business anyway. So he took up writing, so much so that today's authors of detective and women's novels would envy his fertility. Genrikh Samoilovich wrote his own biography, and reflections on Stalin, and a detailed critical analysis of the "Short Course in the History of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks". He was presented with the latest shortwave receiver to listen to Moscow radio, Soviet newspapers and magazines were regularly sent. Lyushkov read and books on history, as well as Russian fiction: Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Chekhov. The translator who translated Lyushkov's opuses recalled: "He was an intellectual with a broad view of the world. He knew a lot not only about politics, economics and military affairs, but also about music and Once I had to translate a critical essay he had written on Russian literature."

While visiting a bookstore in the Kanda area, Lyushkov was especially interested in the writings of Trotsky and his followers. Those working with the Japanese commissar had the impression that he had either been a Trotskyist before, or had now begun to share the ideas of Stalin's worst enemy. Lyushkov allegedly said that the ideology of Trotskyism is necessary in order to turn the Russian people away from Stalinism. It is hard to imagine that Lyushkov ever belonged to the Trotskyist opposition in the past. In this case, he could not have held out until 1938 in high positions in the NKVD. But in Japan, of course, Trotskyism might well have attracted Genrikh Samoylovich as a Marxist alternative to Stalinist ideology. Japanese officers who knew Lyushkov testify that he remained committed to what he called "pure Leninism." He believed that Stalin's regime would not collapse on its own - it had to be overthrown. Genrikh Samoilovich was still in favor of collectivization, speaking only against the violent methods of its implementation. Later, under the influence of life in Tokyo, he turned from a Trotskyist into a "liberal communist", close in views to the Western European Social Democrats. Lyushkov did not maintain any contacts with the Russian emigration in Manchuria and Japan.

The end of Lyushkov is still shrouded in darkness of obscurity. The most reliable version is based on the story of Japanese intelligence captain Takeoka Yutaka, the former head of the special intelligence agency in the Dairen Intelligence Branch. It boils down to the following. IN

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@4

At the beginning of 1945, it was decided to send Lyushkov to Manchuria, since all intelligence data about the USSR and propaganda developments in the event of a Soviet-Japanese war now wanted to concentrate the command of the Kwantung Army, which had been greatly weakened by that time. It is not clear why another defector, Frantsevich, was not seconded there, who was still a specialist in military affairs and much better than Lyushkov could assess the data on the combat power and plans of the Red Army.

Difficulties in communication with Manchuria and long bureaucratic correspondence regarding the detachment of the defector led to the fact that Lyushkov flew to Dairen (Far) only on August 8, 1945, on the day the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and already after the American atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Takeoka met him there. He believed, not without reason, that it was already too late and that Lyushkov would no longer be of any use to the Kwantung Army. The next day, they, along with the interpreter Kakuzo Takaya, arrived in Port Arthur. The Red Army had already invaded Manchuria, and the Japanese, together with Lyushkov, considered it good to return to Dairen, where they settled in the Yamato Hotel. On August 10, Takaya offered to go to the headquarters of the Kwantung Army in Sinkin to find out what to do next with Lyushkov. To talk, they went into another room, since Lyushkov already understood a little Japanese. Takeoka reasonably noted that Lyushkov was probably not up to the task at the moment. But he decided that Takaya had a family in Shinkin and he just wanted to try and evacuate his family to Japan. Therefore, the kind captain allowed the interpreter to leave, and he returned to Lyushkov and assured him that the situation was under control.

Such Takeoka met after 19 years in a Tokyo hotel. The interpreter confessed that he planted such a pig on his colleague, forcing him to mess around with a Russian defector he did not know (fortunately, Takeoka spoke some Russian). The former captain spoke about the fate of Lyushkov. Takeoka and Takaya agreed to meet again, but they never saw each other again.

On August 11, Colonel Tsutomu Yamashita, acting head of the special agency in Harbin, summoned Lieutenant Tanaka, who had previously worked with Lyushkov, and said that under the new conditions, the defector must be removed, otherwise the Soviets would be able to find out that the Japanese used the services of the defector. And the liquidation should be carried out by Tanaka. He experiences moral torment, because he considers Lyushkov his friend and teacher, who helped him get to know the Soviet Union better. The lieutenant shares his doubts with Takaya. Then the latter agrees to take on this unpleasant mission, but puts forward two conditions. He and his family are evacuated to Japan and paid a tidy sum of 30,000 yen. Takaya leaves for Dairen, and on August 14 returns to Sinkin (near Harbin) and reports on the fulfillment of the order, receives money from the gullible colonel and safely departs for Japan. Only in 1964 did Takaya confess

Takeoka that he did not go to Lyushkov (which the captain, however, already knew), but stayed in Mukden for two days to create the appearance of completing the task.

Meanwhile, after the interpreter's departure, Takeoka continued to ask Yamashita and the Kwantung Army headquarters what to do with Lyushkov after all. On August 15, the captain received a radiogram from Tokyo that Japan had surrendered. This news caused a growing

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fighting@>

disorganization in the ranks of the Kwantung Army. Her command was supposed to give the order to lay down their arms from hour to hour. Since the headquarters of the Kwantung Army left Sinkin on the 12th, Takeoka lost contact with his superiors. All these days he had no time even to visit Lyushkov, who, without going anywhere, was sitting in a hotel. Takeoka himself had to decide on the fate of the defector, but, fortunately, he met the head of the Kwantung Fortified Region, Lieutenant General Genzo Yanagida. Takeoka, visiting the general who headed the Harbin Special Agency in 1941, was very surprised that Yanagida did not know anything about Lyushkov's escape from the USSR and heard this name for the first time (the materials prepared by Lyushkov for the Japanese were signed by the pseudonym Manatov).

The captain offered a choice of five options for how to deal with Lyushkov:

- 1) send it back to Japan (Takeoka knew this was very difficult to do);
- 2) let him escape to Northern China (not easy, but possible);
- 3) induce him to commit suicide;
- 4) give him the opportunity to save himself;
- 5) hand it over to the Russians.

The general's first reaction was: "Why not let him go on all four sides?" However, on reflection, Yanagida decided that it would not be good if Lyushkov still fell into the hands of the Red Army. Then the secret details of how the Japanese General Staff used the defector could become known to the Russians.

"It's a pity for Lyushkov," the samurai sighed, "but in order to prevent possible troubles later, it's better for us to get rid of him now."

Takeoka did not want to kill Lyushkov, and this idea seemed to him simply disgusting. The captain understood that the secrets that Lyushkov knew were not so great in order to take his life because of them. And what, in fact, could Genrikh Samoylovich tell. SMERSH? That he told the Japanese everything he knew, and that, on behalf of Japanese intelligence, he wrote the texts of propaganda leaflets and reviews on the situation in the USSR and the state of the Red Army? The head of SMERSH, Viktor Semyonovich Abakumov, would have known about this in advance, without any interrogations of the defector. And who cares now, when the Kwantung Army and

Japanese empire living out the last hours? And most importantly, Takeoka, although he graduated from intelligence school in Nakano and had already served in the army for six years, had never killed a person. And now what, will he have to take the life of an innocent, sympathetic stranger? Yes, everything, when the war is over... But the senior commander, General Yanagida, ordered the captain to liquidate Lyushkov if he did not agree to commit suicide.

Soviet troops were expected in Dairen any minute, and Takeoka had to hurry. He decided that he would carry out Yanagida's order on August 20.

On the evening of that day, Takeoka visited Lyushkov at the hotel for the first time after a long absence. Heinrich Samoilovich already knew about the Japanese surrender (and, I will note in brackets, according to Takeoka, he did not show any concern - he did not even try to find the captain in the office of their agency all these days). Takeoka invited him to come to him to discuss the situation. Lyushkov appeared. And so, through an interpreter, the captain urged him to voluntarily die for two hours. Clearly, he does not

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@6

agreed. Lyushkov assured that it was still possible to get away from the inexorably advancing Red Army: "I will try to get away as far as possible. If the Russians grab me on the way, come what may. Japan owes help me".

Takeoka realized that the former commissioner of state security would never commit suicide. We'll have to act differently, as ordered by General Yanagida ...

In 1991, Takeoka explained to Alvin Cooks why he did not entrust the liquidation of Lyushkov to one of his subordinates: as a unit commander, he realized that he must assume full responsibility for the execution of this terrible order for him. But he still couldn't decide to kill.

The conversation with Lyushkov ended at about 10 pm. Takeoka went out onto the veranda, illuminated by moonlight, and once again tried to convince himself that the murder of Lyushkov was an important, necessary matter. After all, he has absolutely no personal interest or benefit here - he only carries out an order. (This is probably how Lyushkov convinced himself when he sent innocent people to prison or to be shot as "enemies of the people".) In addition, if the death of a defector eases the situation of the imperial General Staff even a little, then he, Takeoka, comes out, will help the important cause of preserving Japan's military prestige. In the depths of his soul, he, according to him, already felt a prejudice against Lyushkov, a traitor to his homeland.

'Takeoka returned to the office and announced to Genrikh Samoilovich that he agreed with his reasons, and offered to go together to the coast in search of a ship suitable for sailing to Japan. Together with the interpreter-sergeant, they moved to the port. Takeoka walked ahead. He kept his right hand with the Colt in his pocket. As the trio descended the stairs, Takeoka turned around and pointed the revolver straight at Lyushkov's chest. The distance between them was no more than a meter. Takeoka fired. Lyushkov managed to hit him on the arm, and

the bullet hit just below the heart. He fell, and the captain dropped his revolver. Lyushkov lay motionless, but he was still alive.

Several employees of the agency were sitting in the lobby at the entrance. One of them, civil servant Kazuo Arimitsu, ran out at the sound of a gunshot.

- Where did you get him? he asked, seeing Lyushkov prone on the ground.

"Perhaps in the chest," answered Takeoka, confused. "Then he is hopeless," said Arimitsu, raised his revolver and finished off Lyushkov with a second shot in the head.

The captain ordered to wrap the corpse in a blanket and take it to the basement. He ordered his employees to forget about what had happened.

At midnight on August 20, Takeoka reported to Yanagida that the task had been completed.

The captain offered to cremate Lyushkov's body. Cremation required a death certificate. The general called the military hospital and asked that Takeoka, without further ado, issue a death certificate for one of his subordinates, an employee of a special agency. At about 5 o'clock in the morning, when the paper was ready, Lyushkov's body was placed in a coffin. An hour before, one of the cooks claimed to have heard human groans coming from the basement. Takeoka was amazed: "This is the first time I've heard of a person not dying immediately after two pistol shots at point-blank range, one of which was in the head." By the evening of the 21st, the corpse was cremated. At 2 pm on the 22nd, the urn with the ashes was buried in one of the cemeteries of Dairen. And two hours later, Soviet troops landed in the city.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@U

paratroopers.

In Soviet captivity, Takeoka was interrogated about Lyushkov's fate. The captain tried to speak less, but only the truth and answer only those questions that he was asked. The interrogators knew that before them was the intelligence officer who headed the special agency in Dairen. Around November 26, 1945, Takeoka, who had by then been brought to the headquarters of the Trans-Baikal Front in Chita, was first asked about a man named Malatov. The Japanese intelligence officer replied that he did not know such a thing. However, it soon became clear to him that the Smershevites knew that Lyushkov was hiding under this pseudonym, and that at the end of the war he lived in Dairen at the Ogon Hotel (according to Takeoka, the Russians made a mistake with the name of the hotel). And the captain decided to split up, especially since the investigator accurately named him, the head of a special agency in Dairen, his position and official duties. But first he asked, smiling: "If you know so much, why do you need to interrogate me? You should be aware of the fate that befell Lyushkov. I don't need to add anything, do I?" The Soviet officer also smiled: "Of course, we know everything, but we need to hear this story directly from you. Tell us it without hiding."

Takeoka told the investigator about how he eliminated Lyushkov. He only kept silent about the fact that it was not he himself who finished him off, but Arimitsu. The investigator did not believe that Takeoka had actually shot the defector. The Russians also suspected that Japanese intelligence had helped Genrikh Samoylovich escape.

They tried to catch the captain on the details: they asked him to describe the furniture in Yanagida's residence and what the general was wearing on the evening of August 20. At the end of the interrogation, Takeoka felt that the interrogator believed him.

On December 5, 1945, the former head of the Dairen Special Agency was also delivered to Moscow. Here Abakumov himself interrogated him. He accused Takeoka of insincerity. The captain asked what he meant - it turned out that the Chekists knew that someone else had finished off Lyushkov. It turned out that Arimitsu was also interrogated and admitted that it was he who fired the second shot. Takeoka began to make excuses that he only wanted to emphasize that he took full responsibility for the murder of the defector as a senior boss and therefore did not mention his subordinate. He thought it was important for Moscow to know whether Lyushkov was alive or dead, not whether he had been shot once or twice. Abakumov remarked irritably: "What is important and what is not is for the Soviet government to decide, not for you."

Takeoka spent a year in prison at Lubyanka. In August 1946, the captain was called as a witness to the trial of the former ataman of the Transbaikal Cossack army, Grigory Mikhailovich Semenov, who was tried by a military tribunal. The head of the Dairen special agency worked with the chieftain throughout the last year of the war. Semyonov lived in a dacha near Dairen and actively collaborated with Japanese intelligence. For example, he participated in the creation of military formations of white emigration in case of a Soviet-Japanese war. True, when the war nevertheless began, these projects were never implemented due to the transience of hostilities and the obviously hopeless situation of Japan.

The next day, after a speedy trial, Semyonov was hanged.

Then Takeoka spent two years in the Lefortovo prison. In June 1948 he was given 25 years in prison for his professional activities - espionage against the Soviet Union. Takeoka was transferred to the Vladimir prison, where for some reason they were kept separately from other Japanese prisoners. He was not beaten, not tortured, and even, unlike other captured Japanese

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services"@8

officers were not forced to work. But the intelligence officers of the Kwantung Army were treated especially badly in the USSR. So, only about 20 graduates of the intelligence school in Nakano, including Takeoka, returned from Soviet captivity, and even then in the last batch of repatriated. In February 1956, shortly before leaving the USSR, he was fortunate enough to meet with Colonel Asada Saburo, Yamashita's predecessor as head of the Harbin Special Agency. It was Asada who was one of the initiators of Lyushkov's last business trip to Manchuria, but even before his arrival he was transferred to another post. Now the captain told the colonel how he eliminated Lyushkov, and Asada approved of his actions.

Upon his return to Japan, Takeoka remained silent until 1979, when, after the publication of Hiyama's book about the failed assassination attempts on Stalin, he told Kawaguchi Noboji, a journalist for the Shukan Asahi newspaper, about how he had killed a high-ranking Soviet defector. The latter titled his article, based on conversations with Takeoka, very catchily "The last moments of the life of General Lyushkov - the protagonist of Stalin's assassination plan." The logic was simple: since the defector was involved in

plan to assassinate Stalin - so there was a reason not to allow him to fall into the hands of SMERSH.

However, no one else, except Takeoka alone, could confirm the details of his version. Nobuyuki and Cooks managed to talk with the translator Yabe Chuta, and with the former head of the Harbin Special Agency, Colonel Asada Saburo, and several other former Japanese intelligence officers. But they only reported that in 1945 the question of transferring Lyushkov to Manchuria was really considered. None of them, however, met Genrikh Samoilovich there in August 1945.

Meanwhile, to transfer Lyushkov to Dairen on August 8, when the war with the Soviet Union had already become a fact, there was not the slightest sense for Japanese intelligence. As an expert on the Red Army, the former commissar of state security was clearly out of time, and indeed unsuitable. After all, his information about the army was seven years old. The leaders of the Soviet troops in the Far East, V. M. Blyukher and G. M. Stern, personally known to Lyushkov, had already been executed for a long time. The tactics of the Red Army, which had carried out a four-year extermination war with Germany, had long since changed. And even Yezhov, from whose iron grip Lyushkov fled, disappeared from the face of the earth six years earlier. The only thing that Genrikh Samoylovich could still be useful to the Japanese was his knowledge of the psychology of the Soviet elite. But then his presence was necessary, rather, in Tokyo, so that he could give advice to the government and the imperial General Staff, and not in distant Manchuria, where many agents of Moscow were secretly found. After all, then, in the summer of 1945, the fate of the Kwantung Army was of little concern to the government of the country. It was no longer possible to transfer it to protect the Japanese islands from the threatening American invasion. For this, the Japanese no longer had ships, aircraft, or fuel. In addition, enemy aircraft reigned supreme in the air.

There are some details in Takeoka's story that cause disbelief in his story. The captain, by his own admission, did not kill a single person until August 1945. But Lyushkov was cold-bloodedly shot in the chest, standing face to face. But even hardened killers always prefer to shoot in the back of the head so as not to see the eyes of the victim. I think that it is precisely in the psychological state of Takeoka, who was in Soviet captivity, that the explanation lies why he may have come up with a story about how

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fighting @ 9

personally shot Lyushkov. According to the samurai code of bushido honor, being captured was a terrible shame. As with other returnees from the Soviet camps, the attitude towards Takeoka at home was, to put it mildly, not the most cordial. And the officer, who never in his life had a chance to shoot at the enemy, did not cause respect among his compatriots. Takeoka's comrades in captivity, knowing about his special position in prison, suspected the captain of betraying the secrets of Japanese intelligence to the enemy. And then from a "traitor" Takeoka turned, one might say, into a hero. Fulfilled the order of the chief, did not allow the valuable defector to fall into the hands of the Soviets. And then the unusual position of the captain in captivity is also explained: the Russians seemed to be interested in him as the person who last saw Lyushkov. The idea of killing the former head of the Far Eastern NKVD was suggested to him by the evidence given in Khiyama's book: Lyushkov's body was allegedly found by Soviet soldiers in the water, the Japanese strangled him and threw him off a motor boat.

Takeoka, on the other hand, imagined that it would be better - in his story - to finish off the traitor in a more chivalrous way - with a shot in the chest, and cover up the traces by cremating the corpse.

Personally, I think that no one strangled or shot Lyushkov. He calmly waited until the end of the war in Tokyo and offered his services to the American occupying forces. By that time, the behavior of "Uncle Joe" - Stalin, who had just announced, albeit without any consequences, his desire to occupy Hokkaido, inspired more and more fears among the Americans. At the same time, they experienced a lack of information about the Soviet Union, especially about the situation in the highest echelons of power. For the Office of Strategic Services - the future CIA, even seven years ago, a high-ranking security officer who escaped was of great interest. As we will see later, American intelligence at that time willingly took under its wing Mishinsky-Minishkiy, a German agent, in the past a Soviet party functionary of a much lower level,

than Lyushkov.

Heinrich Samoylovich could also bring some practical benefits to the Americans. Since his business trip to Germany in the early 1930s, he knew some part of the Soviet agents in that country. Surely Lyushkov willingly shared this knowledge with the Americans, whose troops were on German soil. But some of the agents could continue to work in the 1940s. Probably, Lyushkov, under a false name, was transported from Japan to the United States, where he ended his days peacefully. Although, it may turn out, he is still alive, but then he should be almost 100 years old: after all, Genrikh Samoylovich is the same age as the century.

Why American intelligence hid Lyushkov is easy to explain. In 1945, the USSR and the USA were still allies, and the agreement reached in Yalta in February provided for the return to their homeland of all former Soviet citizens who found themselves in the western zones of occupation. If Stalin found out that Lyushkov was with the Americans, he would have begun to seek his extradition, and oh, how he was needed by those ...

But why didn't Genrikh Samoilovich make the free world happy with his memoirs, as almost every Soviet defector, possessing at least a minimum of literary abilities, considered it morally necessary? As the articles written by Lyushkov in Japan show, he had abilities. And in 1941, Genrikh Samoilovich even negotiated with an American publisher to publish his book in America. This plan was dropped due to the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services" 60

If the defector ended up on the American continent, why did he suddenly fall silent? Here is his colleague Alexander Mikhailovich Orlov (aka Lev Lazarevich Nikolsky, aka Leiba Lazarevich Felbing), who also lived in the United States, where he fled from Spain two weeks later than Lyushkov, after Stalin's death, published "The Gay History of Stalin's Crimes". However, the position of the two Chekists was fundamentally different. Orlov fled to the United States on his own and was not in the service of American intelligence (such intelligence simply did not exist in 1938, at least not in the same form as in the USSR and Japan). Lyushkov, on the other hand, was certainly under complete control - under the hood of the American special services. In addition, Orlov almost all the time

worked only in intelligence and had nothing to do with the mass repressions of the 1930s. Lyushkov, on the other hand, was one of the zealous conductors of the "Yezhovshchina" both in the Azov-Black Sea Territory and in the Far East. Therefore, as an exposé of the crimes of the communist regime, Heinrich Samoylovich was clearly not suitable, since his snout was in fluff. The CIA could not but take this important circumstance into account.

GERMAN STIRLITS IN THE SOVIET HEADQUARTERS

Of the archives of the German special services, the best preserved are those that belonged to the department "Foreign Armies - East" (in the German abbreviation - FHO) of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces. And no wonder: after all, the head of this department, General Reinhard Gehlen, prudently took care of preserving the most important documentation in order to surrender to the Americans at the very end of the war and offer them, as they say, goods in person. His department dealt almost exclusively with the Soviet Union, and in the conditions of the beginning of the Cold War, Gehlen's papers were of great value to the United States. Later, the general headed the intelligence of the FRG, and copies of his archive remained at the disposal of the CIA. Having already retired, the general published his memoirs "Service. 1942 - 1971", which were published in Germany and the USA in 1971-1972. Almost simultaneously with Gehlen's book, his biographies were published in America. One of them, first published in 1971, is called Gehlen - Spy of the Century and is written by a former British intelligence officer and member of the Czech resistance movement, a Greek by nationality, Edward Spiro, who wrote under the pseudonym Edward Cookridge (he died in the 1980s in Vienna). Another, which appeared a year later, was written by the American journalist Charles Whiting and called by him "Gehlen - the German master spy." Both biographies are based on the archives of Gehlen, used with the permission of the American CIA and the West German Federal Intelligence Service (BND), founded by Gehlen himself, as well as on conversations with him and his employees. At the same time, Cookridge adheres to the documentary style of presentation, invariably making references to sources in the notes, while Whiting tends to fictionalize the narrative, relying, however, on memoirs and documents. He forces his hero to conduct detailed dialogues with subordinates or with the leaders of the German army, conveys his thoughts about certain reports, intelligence operations and circumstances. Sometimes Charles Whiting's style of writing resembles Vladimir Bogomolov in his talented novel "In August 1944 (The Moment of Truth)", which deals with the search for

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services⁶³.

counterintelligence officers from SMERSH of the German reconnaissance group sent to us by the same Gehlen and operating in the rear of the 2nd Belorussian Front. But for now, let's turn to the pre-war period.

According to the heads of the German intelligence services and officers who were involved in intelligence activities in the East, before the start of the war they could not boast of any major agents on the territory of our country. The rigid, iron closeness of Soviet society had an effect. As the German General Ernst said

Kestring, who worked as a military attache in Moscow before the war, "an Arab in his white flowing clothes will more easily pass through Berlin without being noticed than a foreigner in Russia." And someone, and Kestring, himself a native of the Tula province, knew our country well. He even served as the prototype for one character in Bulgakov's famous play Days of the Turbins. H. von Herwart, a former adviser to the German embassy in Moscow, recalled:

““The Days of the Turbins” was of particular importance for one employee of our embassy, General Kestring, a military attache. In one of the scenes of the play, it was necessary to evacuate the Hetman of Ukraine Skoropadsky so that he would not fall into the hands of the advancing Red Army (actually, the Petliurites. - B.S. So that the hetman would not be recognized by those around him, he was dressed in a German uniform and carried away on a stretcher under the supervision of a German major. While the Ukrainian leader was being transported in this way, the German major on stage said: "Pure German work" Hetman's adjutant Lieutenant Shervinsky utters the play. - B. S), all with a very strong German accent. So, it was Kestring who was the major who was assigned to Skoropadsky during the events described in the play. When he saw the performance, he resolutely protested, that the actor uttered these words with a German accent, since he, Kestring, spoke Russian quite fluently. The general complained to the director of the theatre. However, despite Kestring's indignation, the execution remained the same.

It is interesting that Bulgakov's main role in the evacuation of Skoropadsky is played not by Major von Dust, but by General von Schratt, who basically talks with the hetman and Shervinsky. And Schratt's entire accent immediately disappears when the hetman is carried away and there is no need to break the comedy anymore. And the German general ends the conversation with the adjutant in quite pure Russian. Either Herwarth got it wrong about the reaction of the military attache, or Kestring himself did not catch the intricacies of Bulgakov's intention. But what the general was absolutely right about was that it was extremely difficult for a foreign agent to infiltrate Soviet society, with the atmosphere of surveillance and general denunciation that prevailed in it. After all, every foreigner in the USSR was considered as a potential spy. It is not surprising that until 1941 German intelligence could not boast of special successes.

The situation changed after the German attack on the USSR. Millions of soldiers and commanders of the Red Army were captured, tens of millions of civilians - in the occupied territory. Among those and others there were many opponents of the Soviet regime, besides, prisoners to cooperate with the intelligence of the enemy - the Abwehr - were pushed by fear of starvation in the camp. The Germans relied on the mass character of agents. Hundreds of reconnaissance groups were deployed across the front line.

But many agents considered the transfer to the Soviet rear as an opportunity to return to their own - and surrendered to the very first patrol. Other

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services?

arrested by the Soviet military counterintelligence. However, some managed to settle in Soviet headquarters or civilian institutions and sometimes get really valuable information. On average, out of every hundred agents, only fifteen managed to return safely.

Many were recruited by the Soviet security agencies, who conducted radio games with the enemy with the help of captured radio operators working under their control. In turn, German intelligence carried out such operations. As Walter Schellenberg, the former head of the UG intelligence department of the imperial Main Security Directorate, later admitted in his memoirs, at one time up to sixty enemy radio operators worked under German control. Both the Soviet and German side took into account the high probability that many agents could work under the control of enemy counterintelligence, and tried to find out when they were supplied with disinformation. Often the same radio game was carried out by both German and Soviet intelligence for their own purposes. For example, in the middle of 1943, the Germans began to use the arrested radio operators of the Red Chapel to probe the possibilities of a separate peace with the Soviet Union, and for this it was necessary to make it clear to Soviet intelligence that the radiograms were under German control and reflect the real intentions of the leadership of the Third Reich. That is why the escape of the previously arrested Soviet resident in Western Europe, Leopold Trepper, was even organized (of course, without his knowledge). The Gestapo arrested almost all the members of the French resistance movement whom Trepper met after his escape, without touching, however, the resident himself and giving him the opportunity to report to Moscow about the failure of the Soviet intelligence network.

And today, historians from different countries and former intelligence officers are endlessly arguing about which reports of German agents were carefully thought-out disinformation prepared in Soviet headquarters, and which ones reflected the true intentions of the Soviet military-political leadership and were sent from German intelligence officers caught in the field of view of the Soviet counterintelligence. Most of the controversy was generated by one message relating to July 1942 and attributed to an agent who allegedly worked in the secretariat of the State Defense Committee (GKO).

Here is how the story is told by Cookridge, the only one who published the full text of this report, in a chapter under the intriguing title "Soviet Commissar Becomes Agent 438":

"In Luckenwald, one of the Gehlen officers made a magnificent acquisition. Among the depressed and exhausted prisoners, he found a certain Vladimir Minishkiy, captured on October 13, 1941 by a group of the Valley-1 intelligence department, headed by Major Baun, who was organizing intelligence on the Eastern Front. Minishkiy was dressed in the uniform of an army captain, and although Baun decided to send him to a special camp in Luckenwald, his true biography was not revealed until the arrival of an officer of the "Foreign armies - East" department there. This 38-year-old Russian was in fact a high-ranking functionary of the Soviet Communist Party and, before the war, served as one of the seven sub-secretaries of the Central Committee (literally *ipäeszsesgetagu*; we were never able to find out what position in the Soviet apparatus Cookridge designated by this English word. - B. S.). Shortly after the German attack on the USSR, in July 1941, he was appointed political commissar to Marshal's Central Army.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services
@ 3

Zhukov. (It is difficult to understand what is at stake here. At the beginning of the war, G.K. Zhukov

He was chief of the General Staff and did not command either the army or the front. From the end of July, he headed the Reserve Front, which operated in the Moscow direction, and in October, after the disaster near Vyazma, the Western Front. In addition, in July - August 1941 there was a Central Front - and not an army - commanded by General M. G. Efremov. Later, part of the formations of this front was surrounded near Vyazma and Bryansk. - B.S). He was captured along with the driver when he was driving around the advanced units during the battle of Vyazemsky.

After eight months in a prisoner-of-war camp, Minishkiy was in a state that made it easier for the FCO officer who interrogated him. The former commissar was deeply depressed by the crushing German victories; besides, he seemed to have a grudge against his former political leaders. In short, he is ripe for treason. As soon as the FHO officer revealed Minishkiy's past, he was sent to Angenbourg, where Gehlen's headquarters were located. As an exception, Gehlen conducted the interrogation himself. His quiet manner and gentle approach must have touched some spring of unfulfilled ambition or unconscious disgust for the ideology that the Russian followed all his life. Gehlen inquired about Minishki's family and learned that he had left his wife and two children in a village west of Moscow, at that time occupied by German troops. Gehlen promised Minishki reunification with his family and said that he would be generously rewarded and given the right to live in Germany as a free man or be an official in Russia after the German victory. In exchange, Minishkiy must become a German agent.

Thus began Operation Flamingo, which Gehlen carried out in collaboration with Baun, who already had a radio operator in Moscow with the pseudonym Alexander. Baun's men ferried Minishkiy across the front line, and he reported to the very first Soviet headquarters the story of his capture and daring escape, every detail of which was invented by Gehlen's experts. He was taken to Moscow, where he was hailed as a hero. Minishki shared what seemed to be valuable information with Soviet intelligence officers from what he had seen during his captivity. As a reward for his courageous act, he was appointed to a position in the military-political secretariat of the GOKO (for us, the abbreviation GKO is more familiar. - B.S.) - Stalin's supreme headquarters. Minishkiy soon made contact with the Flamingo's radio operator and began sending messages using detector crystals received from the FHO. After several initial reports, his first scoop came on July 14, 1942. Gehlen and Guerre sat all night, drawing up a report based on it, which Gehlen personally presented to the Chief of the General Staff, General Halder, the next morning. It said: "The military conference (or meeting of the Military Council) ended in Moscow on the evening of July 13th. Shaposhnikov, Voroshilov, Molotov and the heads of the British, American and Chinese military missions were present. Shaposhnikov declared that their retreat would be as far as the Volga, in order to force the Germans to spend the winter in the area. During the retreat, comprehensive destruction should be carried out in the territory being abandoned; all industry must be evacuated to the Urals and Siberia.

The British representative asked for Soviet assistance in Egypt, but was told that the Soviet manpower resources were not as great as the Allies believed. In addition, they lack aircraft, tanks and artillery, in part because part of the supplies

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@4

weapons destined for Russia, which the British were supposed to deliver through the port of Basra in the Persian Gulf, was diverted to protect Egypt. It was decided to conduct offensive operations in two sectors of the front: north of Orel and north of Voronezh, using large tank forces and air cover. A distraction attack must be carried out at Kalinin. It is necessary that Stalingrad, Novorossiysk and the Caucasus be kept."

Gehlen added his own comment here: "Changes in the general situation at the front in the last few days make it necessary to treat the agent's message with complete confidence. This is confirmed by the enemy's movements on the front of our Army Groups "A" and "B" (advancing respectively to the Caucasus and Stalingrad. - B. S.), his evasive actions on the front of the Don River and his retreat to the Volga at the same time as holding defensive lines in the Northern Caucasus and on the Stalingrad bridgehead; on the front of our Army Group Center, his withdrawal to the line of Tula, Moscow, Kalinin is another confirmation. Whether the enemy is planning a further large-scale retreat in the event of the offensive of our Army Groups North and Center cannot be determined with certainty at the present time.

Two Soviet attacks, at Orel and Voronezh, were carried out as predicted in July, using large numbers of tanks. Halder later noted in his diary: "Lieutenant Colonel Gehlen of the FHO provided accurate information on the enemy forces redeployed starting from June 28, and on the estimated strength of these formations. He also gave a correct assessment of the enemy's energetic actions in the defense of Stalingrad "(this entry was made by the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces on July 15, 1942, on the day when the chief of the FHO announced the report of" Agent 438. -BS).

Of course, Cookridge did not know the realities of the Eastern Front very well and made many mistakes. In particular, allied military missions appeared in Moscow only in 1943. The English historian David Kahn, quoting in his book a fragment of the same report dated July 14, 1942, gives a more correct translation from German: not "heads of the British, American and Chinese military missions", but "British, American and Chinese military attaches." He believes that the "report of Minishkia" was either disinformation or a fantasy of the resident who sent it and did not reflect the actual state of affairs and the true intentions of the Soviet leadership. Kahn sees evidence in favor of this version in the fact that no reports were found about the conference allegedly held on July 13, 1942, either from the British or American military attaches in Moscow.

I decided to check the information reported by "agent 438". It turned out that on all counts they correspond to reality.

Entries in Halder's diary for the second half of July 1942 record massive Soviet attacks with a large number of tanks in the Voronezh region, as well as on the Army Group Center sector (between July 10 and 17) in the Orel region. As Marshal of the Soviet Union I. Kh. Bagramyan recalled, back on July 16, the Headquarters instructed the command of the Western and Kalinin fronts to prepare and conduct the Rzhev-Sychevsk offensive operation in order to divert German forces from the south. However, the operation ended in failure - perhaps also for the reason that the enemy was aware of it in advance. Of course, information about

forthcoming operations of the Soviet troops could deliberately include in

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@5

disinformation report to give it credibility. After all, whether the message about the future offensive of the Red Army on a particular sector of the front is true or not, the German command will still be able to make sure quite quickly.

But is it possible to talk about misinformation in other information reported by "agent 438"? This question must be answered in the negative.

Just in July 1942, the Soviet Union agreed to redirect Lend-Lease from Basra to Egypt in order to help the British army repel the new offensive of Rommel's army. On July 10, Stalin received a message from Churchill, where the British Prime Minister thanked for "the agreement to send 40 Boston bombers to our armed forces in Egypt, which arrived in Basra on their way to you." The statement about the possible depletion of Soviet manpower resources is also true in the report. It was in July 1942 that the Red Army, for the only time in the entire war, faced a replenishment crisis caused by huge losses in killed and prisoners in the first year of the war. On July 23, the proposal of Deputy People's Commissar of Defense E. A. Shchadenko, submitted to the State Defense Committee on July 6, was adopted to reduce the number of beds and reduce the staff of evacuation hospitals. to release an additional 200 thousand people for the needs of the front and rear. At the same time, they did not even think that such shifts would increase the time for the return of the wounded to the line and, in turn, reduce the size of the replenishment due to the recovering wounded: the need for immediate replenishment of the units that suffered heavy losses was too great.

During the First World War, the crisis with human resources in Russia came much later: in the third year of the war, in the autumn of 1916, and the alarming situation with replenishments for the army was carefully concealed from both the enemy and the allies. Now, in the Great Patriotic War, no one was going to hide our crisis in human resources from England and the USA. The Soviet representatives talked about this not only at the meeting on July 13, 1942, which was reported by Minishki, but also in the Allied capitals. Published only in 1984, British diplomatic documents testify that it was on July 14, the day the report was received from "agent 438", that the USSR ambassador to the United States in a conversation with the Secretary of State emphasized that Soviet manpower resources are not inexhaustible, and that the same thing was repeated in London by another Soviet ambassador accredited to the émigré governments based in the British capital.

By the way, back then, in 1942, German intelligence managed to find indirect confirmation of this information of Minishkiy. As Gehlen writes in his memoirs, the Germans were able to read several telegrams from the American embassy in Kuibyshev (where the diplomatic corps was evacuated from Moscow) to Washington, which spoke of Soviet difficulties with labor in the industry.

Finally, even the composition of the participants in the meeting on July 13, which for a long time caused bewilderment of historians, since marshals K. E. Voroshilov and

B. M. Shaposhnikov by that time no longer occupied any significant positions in the leadership of the Red Army (the participation of V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, was natural). However, their presence at the meeting with the allied military attaches is quite understandable: it was Shaposhnikov and Voroshilov who Stalin entrusted with work with foreign delegations. For example, in August 1942, next

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services6@6

A month after the meeting described by Minishkiy, Field Marshal Alan Brooke, Chief of the British General Staff, visited Moscow. And, as is clear from his diary, published after the war, during the visit, Brook from high-ranking Soviet military men met and even drank at a banquet with Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov and Boris Mikhailovich Shaposhnikov. Obviously, Stalin found a worthy occupation for the marshals who were out of work: to appease the allied visitors, to reinforce their confidence with their former authority and cheerful spirit that the Soviet Union would withstand the onslaught of a new German offensive. I also note that later, at the end of 1943, Voroshilov accompanied Stalin to negotiations with Churchill and Roosevelt in Tehran (Shaposhnikov was seriously ill for some time). In addition, in September 1943, Voroshilov became chairman of the Armistice Commission formed under the NKID, which, along with professional diplomats, included Shaposhnikov. So both marshals quite successfully labored in the diplomatic field, which made it natural for their presence at the meeting between Molotov and the Allied military attaches on July 13, 1942.

Data about the redirection of Lend-Lease from Basra instead of the USSR to Egypt and about the crisis of replenishment in the Red Army, of course, were of strategic importance. The likelihood that the German intelligence services would be able to obtain information about this from any other sources was very small, and to inform the enemy about their weakness in terms of human resources or about a temporary reduction in the supply of weapons under Lend-Lease at the most difficult moment of retreat to the Caucasus and the Volga there was no

meaning.

On the further fate of "agent 438" Cookridge reports rather sparingly. According to him, "the participants in Operation Flamingo continued to send reports, but Minishkiy's messages became more and more gloomy. In early October 1942, Gehlen recalled him, arranging, with the help of Bown, the agent to meet with one of the forward Valli reconnaissance units, which ferried him across the front line in the same way that he had previously thrown into the Soviet rear. Subsequently, Minishkiy worked for Gehlen in the information analysis department. He stayed in Germany and survived the war."

Whiting also writes about Minishki, without naming him. He reports that one of the most trusted agents of Major Herman Baun, who settled in Moscow, was a radio operator named Alexander, with the rank of captain, who served in the communications battalion stationed in the capital and transmitted to the Germans "top secret directives of the Red Army." Whiting also mentions the already known report of July 13, 1942, received, in his words, "from one of Bawn's spies."

Finally, the well-known British

military historian John Erickson in his book *The Road to Stalingrad*, published in 1975. He refers to Cookridge's book, but gives a number of details that are missing there. In particular, he calls the agent not Minishkiy, but Mishinsky, and reports that Gehlen himself found him in one of the camps where prisoners who showed a tendency to cooperate with the Germans were kept. Mishinsky is characterized as a "senior commissar" and "a high-ranking party official (from the Moscow organization)" (it is not clear - city or regional), captured in October 1941. According to Erickson, Gehlen recruited Mishinsky through deceit and blackmail. This is believed with difficulty. Of course, Gehlen had

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the special services

the possibility of unfailing pressure on the agent, if the Germans really managed to find his family in the occupied territory. However, Minishkiy-Mishinsky would hardly have started working behind the front line out of fear of new masters alone. After all, he always had the opportunity, with the help of the NKVD, to organize a radio game, and it would be difficult for the Germans to convict the agent of a lie - given the uniqueness of the information he reports - secret information needed an agent working not for fear, but for conscience. Perhaps Mishinsky (or Minishkiy), then, in May 1942, when Gehlen recruited him, sincerely believed in the inevitability of a German victory and expected to make a career with the winners. Or maybe, as Cookridge suggested, "agent 438" in the depths of his soul for some reason did not tolerate the Soviet system, which he served by inertia for many years, and Gehlen simply gave him the opportunity to realize a long-standing secret desire to take revenge on the party bosses.

Another version of the fate of Minishkiy-Mitinsky was presented to me in a conversation by my friend, the French historian Gabor Rittersporn. According to him, the name of Gehlen's agent was really Vladimir Mishinsky, and not Minishky. In any case, under the name Mishinsky, he later settled in the United States. Before the war, Mishinsky really worked in the Moscow regional party committee, and after the war, together with Gehlen, Baun and others, he went to the service of the Americans. First, he taught at an American intelligence school in southern Germany, and then moved to the United States, settled in Virginia, and received American citizenship. According to Rittersporn, Mishinsky married in America, but later his wife left him, and he apparently had no children from this marriage. The former "438 agent" died in the 1980s, all in the same Virginia.

I think that Mishinsky is also not a real surname. It is unlikely that a person who could be wanted by the NKVD would risk entering the United States under his real name. Neither in the secretariat of the Central Committee, nor among the members of the Moscow city committee and the regional party committee on the eve of the war, I was able to find a single person with the surname Mishinsky or Minishki. Most likely, the future Golenovsky agent worked somewhere in the apparatus of the Moscow Regional Committee and bore a completely different surname. Perhaps someday we will know his true name. It must be preserved in the archives of the CIA and the BND.

Mishinsky, apparently, was not the only German spy in the Soviet headquarters. In his memoirs, Gehlen mentions that he received a report from an unknown Abwehr agent dated April 13, 1942 from Major Baun. It said that in Kuibyshev a member

The Central Committee of the party I. I. Nosenko, who after the war became the Minister of the shipbuilding industry, told the editor of the newspaper Pravda that at the last joint meeting of the "Presidium of the Central Committee" (the Politburo?) and the Supreme High Command, it was decided to wrest the operational initiative from the Germans before they will begin their offensive, and the Red Army must go on the offensive at the first opportunity after the May holidays. The attack of the troops of the South-Western direction on Kharkov, which followed on May 12, which ended in failure and the capture of the shock group, was considered by Gehlen to be a confirmation of the correctness of the information received from Kuibyshev.

Gehlen quotes another important intelligence message from Moscow received in the first ten days of November 1942. It said that on November 4, Stalin held the Main Military Council with the participation of 12 marshals and

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@8

generals. The council decided, weather permitting, to begin all planned offensive operations no later than 15 November. These operations were planned in the North Caucasus in the direction of Mozdok, on the Middle Don against the Italian 8th and Romanian 3rd armies, in the area of the Rzhev salient, and also near Leningrad. On November 7, Kurt Zeitzler, who replaced Halder as Chief of the General Staff, informed Hitler of the essence of this report, indicating that the Russians had decided before the end of 1942 to go on the offensive on the Don and against the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead. However, the Fuhrer refused to withdraw troops in the area of Stalingrad. According to Gehlen, subsequent events proved the truth of the information about the meeting with Stalin on November 4, 1942. The head of the FHO suggested that the main blow of the Red Army would be inflicted on the Romanian 3rd Army, which covered the Stalingrad grouping from the flank. And on November 18, the day before the start of the Soviet offensive, Gehlen made the correct conclusion that the Soviet strike would follow not only from the north, because of the Don, but also from the south, from the Beketovka region. But it was already too late.

At the same time, Gehlen prefers not to mention in his memoirs about his serious mistake in assessing the report of the residency agent "Max". On November 6, 1942, the chief of the "Foreign armies - East" department reported to Zeitzler: "In front of the German Eastern Front, the point of main efforts in the upcoming operations of the enemy looms with ever greater clarity in the area of Army Group Center." To this, Gehlen added that until now it is unclear whether the Russians have sufficient strength to launch an offensive in the area of Army Group B. This conclusion, as subsequent events showed, was erroneous, but the unknown agent was not at all guilty of this. His report did not say which of upcoming Soviet strikes are more important.

The command of the Red Army in November 1942 really planned two main attacks: on the Rzhev-Vyazma direction and on the flanks of the German 6th Army in Stalingrad, covered by less combat-ready Romanian troops, and believed that there would be enough forces for both attacks. The debate, whether the report quoted by Gehlen was a well-thought-out misinformation or reflected the real plans of the Soviet command, continues to this day. The suspicions of the researchers are caused by two circumstances. Firstly, the report immediately listed several possible directions of Soviet attacks, both main and purely auxiliary, such as the area south of Lake Ilmen, without

a specific indication of where the main efforts of the Red Army will be concentrated. Such a disposition could induce the German command to disperse its reserves and make it easier for the Soviet troops to advance in the directions of the main attacks. Secondly, the direction of the Soviet offensive on the Don in the agent's message was indicated to the west of what was actually chosen on November 19 - to the right wing of the Southwestern Front, in the area of Upper and Lower Mamon, against the Italian 8th Army. In reality, the main blow was delivered by the left wing of this front - against the Romanians. However, as disinformation, such a somewhat incorrect indication of the direction of our strike lost its meaning, because it still showed the intention of the Soviet command to surround the Stalingrad group of Germans (the difference is only in the depth of coverage, especially since such a plan for a deeper coverage of the Germans between the Volga and the Don actually existed in the Soviet General Staff). The German command in this case could withdraw its 6th army from the threat of encirclement, and the message about the planned offensive

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services" 69

Soviet troops against the Italians could just push for just such a decision, clearly unfavorable for the offensive of the Red Army.

Initially, the date for the transition to the offensive of the South-Western and Don Fronts was set for November 15.

Marshal A. M. Vasilevsky, who coordinated the actions of the fronts, notes in his memoirs: "According to our most firm calculations, the concentration of the last military formations and everything necessary to start the operation should have ended no later than November 15." Zhukov in "Memoirs and Reflections" quotes his message to Stalin on "Bodo" dated November 11: "Things are going badly with supplies and with the supply of ammunition. There are very few shells for "Uranus" (the conditional name of the operation to encircle the Stalingrad grouping of the enemy. - B.S.) in the troops. The operation will not be prepared by the due date. Ordered to cook on 11/15/1942. Probably, the original date was even earlier: November 12 or 13. However, by the 15th it was not possible to bring all the required supplies. Therefore, the start of the offensive was postponed to November 19 for the Southwestern and Don Fronts and to the 20th for Stalingrad.

It is also likely that the original offensive plan of the Southwestern Front differed from what was actually carried out. Zhukov, in particular, writes that "from November 1 to November 4, plans for the Southwestern Front were considered and corrected." It is possible that the adjustment just consisted in changing the direction of the main blow. It is no longer possible to establish this precisely today: the front commander N.F. Vatutin and his chief of staff, Major General G.D. Stelmakh, died in the war and left no memoirs.

Let's list a few more plausible reports of German agents, possibly coming from the highest Soviet headquarters. About two weeks before the start of the Soviet offensive on the Kursk Bulge, Gehlen predicted its time: mid-July - and direction; Eagle. As N. S. Khrushchev, who was then a member of the Military Council of the Voronezh Front, testifies in his memoirs, even before the German attack on Kursk, which began on July 5, 1943, the Stavka decided to launch an offensive first on Orel, and then on Kharkov: "Now it's no longer remember why our

the offensive (on Kharkov. - B.S.) was scheduled for July 20th. This, apparently, was determined by the fact that we could get everything we needed only by the named date. Stalin told us that Rokossovsky's Central Front would conduct an offensive operation six days before us (on Orel. - B.S.), and then we would begin our operation. It is possible that some of the German agents informed their people in advance about the planned attack on Orel, which the Wehrmacht (German armed forces), in turn, forestalled with an attack on the Kursk salient.

John Erickson's book *The Road to Berlin*, published in 1983, contains a report by an unknown agent presented by Gehlen to the General Staff on May 3, 1944, stating that at the Soviet headquarters, chaired by Stalin, two options for the Soviet summer offensive were discussed at the end of March. The first provided for the main attack in the area of Lvov, Kovel with a simultaneous attack on Warsaw and a Polish uprising in the German rear. According to the second option, which was adopted, the main blow was delivered in the direction of the Baltic, and in the course of it it was planned to capture Warsaw and the armed action of the Poles was calculated. The auxiliary strike was planned to the south, in the direction of Lvov. It is easy to see that this is exactly how the Soviet troops acted in the summer of 1944, when the main offensive was the famous Operation Bagration.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fight@0

- led to the defeat of the group of enemy armies in Belarus and Lithuania and brought the Red Army to the Vistula near Warsaw and to the Baltic coast, to the approaches to East Prussia. An auxiliary attack on Lvov made it possible to occupy part of Eastern Galicia and seize the Sandomierz bridgehead beyond the Vistula. Hitler could have prevented the defeat of his forces in Belarus if, back in May, believing the intelligence report, he had withdrawn the troops of Army Group Center from the so-called "Belarusian balcony" that protruded far to the East. However, they would have to retreat very far - at least to the Bug, and even to the Vistula. In this case, the Red Army by June would have been on the outskirts of Germany's borders. But then Hitler was no longer fighting for victory, but only for gaining time, hoping either for a split in the coalition opposing him, or for the invention of some kind of "wonder weapon" that could radically change the course of the war in his favor. With regard to gaining time, even the loss of significant German forces in Belarus was justified, since thereby the advance of the Red Army to the borders of the Reich was delayed at least one and a half to two months. Therefore, Hitler forbade the withdrawal of Army Group Center and, despite the risk of encirclement, decided to defend on the former lines.

There was another case when the German command, most likely, received reliable information from an agent who sat at least in the headquarters of the front, and based on it made a strategic decision. This report has not yet been published, but the actions of the German generals indicate its existence.

As you know, on August 1, 1944, the Polish Craiova Army, subordinate to the Polish exile government not recognized by the Soviet Union in London, launched the Warsaw Uprising, which was widely supported by the population of the city. The Soviet military-political leadership also counted on the Polish armed uprising in Warsaw. However, it believed that the rebels would be led by

pro-communist Polish Army of Ludow. When these calculations did not come true, Stalin began to seriously fear that the Poles themselves, who linked their interests with London, and not Moscow, could establish control over Warsaw, and then over all of Poland. By that time, Soviet troops had captured the Mangushevsky and Pulawy bridgeheads beyond the Vistula in the Warsaw region and had a real opportunity to help the rebels.

As early as July 30, Prime Minister of the Polish government in exile Stanisław Mikolajczyk arrived in Moscow. During two conversations with Stalin, on August 3 and 9, he was asked to join forces with the pro-Soviet Polish National Liberation Committee in Lublin, under the latter's de facto dominance. Mikolajczyk refused, and this sealed the fate of the rebels.

On August 8, Marshals G.K. Zhukov and K.K. Rokossovsky proposed a plan for an operation to liberate Warsaw, which could begin on August 25th. However, Stalin never gave the order to carry it out. On August 12, a TASS statement was published in which the Soviet side completely disclaimed responsibility for the fate of the Warsaw insurgents. And on August 16, Stalin sent a letter to Mikolajczyk, where he described the uprising in Warsaw as "a frivolous adventure that caused aimless casualties of the population." Polish authors point to the existence of a certain "stop order" that forbade the Red Army in those days to advance on Warsaw. True, neither the exact date nor the content of this order is still known, but the fact that it existed is doubtful.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services @ 3.

hard. And almost certainly the German command also learned about it in a timely manner.

Soviet historians, justifying the actions of the Soviet troops near Warsaw, traditionally pointed out that the Germans concentrated five tank divisions against the bridgeheads beyond the Vistula and stopped the advance of the Red Army with powerful counterattacks. At the same time, for some reason, they forget to mention that all these tank divisions were already sent north in the second decade of August to carry out an operation to restore land communications between Army Groups Center and North, disrupted by the Soviet breakthrough to the Baltic Sea near Tukums. The operation began on August 16, and by the end of the month the Germans managed to push back the Soviet troops from the Baltic coast and restore land communications with Army Group North. Meanwhile, if at that time the Red Army had launched an offensive on the Vistula, the German counterattack in the north would have lost all meaning. In this case, the Wehrmacht would have practically no chance to keep Warsaw. We would have to retreat at least to the Oder. The Germans had no chance to hold their positions from the Baltic to the mouth of the Oder; for such a vast front, they simply would not have had enough troops. And the Oder line, which by the autumn of 1944 had not yet been prepared for defense, would also have been very difficult for German troops to hold, and the Red Army could already really threaten Berlin.

On such a risky maneuver as the transfer of tank divisions from near Warsaw to the north, the German command could only decide if it was firmly convinced that the Soviet troops on the Vistula would not budge in the coming weeks. For such confidence, one statement by TASS was, of course, not enough. In all likelihood, some

a reliable German agent informed his people about Stalin's "stop order". The Soviet dictator preferred to allow the Germans to suppress the Poles' uprising, which was harmful to his plans in Poland, and he himself struck the main blow in Romania in order to establish control over the long-desired Balkan Peninsula before the allies.

Finally, in December 1944, Gehlen managed to predict quite accurately that the Red Army would now deliver the main blows in the direction of Berlin and East Prussia and that the offensive would begin around January 12, 1945. The head of the FHO even offered to evacuate troops from East Prussia in advance in order to concentrate maximum forces for the defense of the capital of the Reich, but this time did not meet Hitler's understanding. It is quite possible that in this case, in his knowledge, Gehlen relied on the report of an agent from some Soviet headquarters no lower than the front.

Gehlen's predictions that in January 1945 the main blow of the Red Army would fall on East Prussia were completely justified. The former commander of the 2nd Belorussian Front, Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky, noted in his memoirs:

"In my opinion, when East Prussia was completely isolated from the west, it would be possible to postpone the liquidation of the group of Nazi troops surrounded there, and by strengthening the weakened 2nd Belorussian Front, speed up the denouement in the Berlin direction. The fall of Berlin would have happened much earlier. But it turned out that 10 armies at the decisive moment were involved against the East Prussian grouping ... and the weakened troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front were not able to fulfill their task. The use of such a mass of troops against the enemy, cut off from his main forces and

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ "?

remote from the place where the main events were decided, in the situation that had developed by that time in the Berlin direction, it was clearly inappropriate.

Note that this initially withdrawn fragment of memoirs was restored only in the 1997 edition.

It is difficult to say whether Gehlen then, in late 1944 - early 1945, had reliable sources in the Soviet headquarters or simply made the right strategic conclusion from an analysis of the situation at the front. The fact is that a powerful blow in East Prussia was dictated by purely political considerations. As early as the end of 1943, at the Tehran Conference of the Leaders of the Three Allied Powers, Stalin announced Soviet claims to Koenigsberg and the adjacent territory of East Prussia. So the Red Army tried to capture this region as soon as possible, just on the eve of the next, Yalta, conference, in order to put the Allies before a fait accompli. Perhaps Stalin was afraid that after the capitulation of Berlin, the East Prussian grouping of the enemy would surrender to the Anglo-American landing force and the booty would get out of hand. It is possible that German intelligence became aware of the claims made in Tehran to Koenigsberg. The offensive of the Soviet troops in East Prussia cost very heavy losses, but did not lead to a quick defeat of the enemy.

Who was the unknown German agent in the General Staff of the Red Army who warned about the Soviet offensive near Stalingrad in November 1942 and in Belarus in the spring of 1944? Former Soviet intelligence colonel Yuri Ivanovich Modin, in his book *The Fates of Intelligence Officers: My Cambridge Friends*, claims that the British were afraid to supply the Soviet Union with information obtained through the decoding of German reports, precisely because of the fear that there were German agents in the Soviet headquarters:

“The Germans used a very good, light and fast Enigma cipher machine, invented immediately after the First World War ... Stuart Menzies, head of British intelligence (MI6), attracted the talented mathematician Alan Turing to study Enigma. Cooperation between England, France and Poland (in the deciphering of German codes) continued until the start of the war in Europe ... During the war, the Poles managed to capture several badly damaged Enigmas as trophies. But the Germans continued to improve their system. In the summer of 1940, Turing and his colleagues at Bletchley Park (the government cipher school where Soviet agent John Cairncross worked. - B.S.), using one of the very first computers (Colossus), eventually cracked the Enigma code. The importance of this success cannot be overestimated, because it gave the Allies access to all the transmissions that went on the radio between the German government and the high command of the Nazi army. All units of the German troops were equipped with Enigma.

During the Battle of Stalingrad, Soviet troops captured at least twenty-six Enigmas, but all of them were damaged, because German operators were given strict orders to destroy them in case of danger. After German prisoners of war gave out the cipher used on these machines, Soviet experts were able to decipher several passages from German telegrams, but they never found the master key to the Enigma system, which Bletchley Park's experts had already received by that time. Among themselves English specialists

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: “The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fight@3

called the interception of coded texts "ultraintelligence".

The British Secret Service, which also knew the codes of the German Navy and Air Force, allowed only a few absolutely trusted operators to operate Ultra. The decrypted telegrams were sent to strictly limited addresses: intelligence chiefs, the prime minister and some members of the government ...

To hide the fact that the Enigma code had been deciphered, the British used to say that this kind of work was done for them by German agents in Germany or in Nazi-occupied countries. They made inscriptions on the documents: “received from X from Austria” or “from Y from Ukraine” (as for Ukraine, it is implausible: the presence of British agents there was too unlikely. - B.S.). Only a limited number of Bletchley Park employees were aware of the actual origin of these materials. In addition to Turing and his assistants, Churchill, one or two intelligence chiefs, and - thanks to our British agents - were also privy to the secret.

Soviet Union.

The British refused to share their information with us, not only for political reasons. They were sure that German spies had infiltrated the highest echelons of the Red Army. This confidence had some basis. The NKVD had its own suspicions about this. During the war, two or three members of the Soviet General Staff were arrested and shot as German agents; others may have gotten away with it."

It is unlikely that we will ever know whether German agents really fell into the hands of the Chekists or just random people from the General Staff, who for one reason or another aroused suspicion: after all, then, if real traitors could not be caught, they were usually invented. This happened, for example, with a group of aviator generals who were arrested before the Great Patriotic War and in its early days on charges of conspiracy and espionage in favor of Germany. A real German agent in our General Staff, quite possibly, survived the war. It is possible that he was among those few dozens (if not hundreds) of Soviet officers who defected in the late 1940s and early 1950s to the western occupation zones of Germany and Austria. The surviving agent can be understood. He had to be constantly tormented by the fear of being exposed by his own people, and that the heirs of the departments of Canaris and Schellenberg, blackmailing him with a treacherous past, would force him to resume the most dangerous work for foreign intelligence. Under such conditions, the best way out was to "choose freedom": to go to the West "for ideological reasons." Western intelligence services, of course, would not disclose the true past of the defector.

It is possible that the agent of Gehlen, Canaris or Schellenberg in the General Staff of the Red Army was Colonel Kirill Tsmirievich Kalinov, who in 1949 served in the apparatus of the Soviet military administration in Berlin and moved to the western part of the city. The following year, he published in Germany the book "Soviet marshals have a word", where, based on the documents of the General Staff, he cited data on the irretrievable losses of the Red Army in the Great Patriotic War: 8.5 million dead on the battlefield and missing, 2.5 million dead wounded and 2.6 million dead in captivity. As studies later showed, these first post-war estimates underestimated the true losses - more than 26 million Red Army soldiers - by about half.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@4

I will give one more curious addition to the rather meager data on German agents that could supply information about the strategic plans of the Soviet command. Walter Schellenberg, in the American version of his memoirs, published posthumously in 1956 under the title "Labyrinth", wrote that through one of the centers for collecting and processing information on Russia, "the existence of which was known only to three persons in the Main Directorate, we were able to enter in direct contact with two officers from the headquarters of Marshal Rokossovsky.

"Interestingly, both of them expressed doubt about Rokossovsky's loyalty to Stalin. Rokossovsky, a former officer of the tsarist army (in reality, only a non-commissioned officer. - B.S.), spent several

years in Siberia.

Later, when the military intelligence department of Admiral Canaris came under my control (this happened after the resignation of the "land admiral" in February 1944. - B.S.), I added another very important intelligence center. His boss was a German Jew who used completely unusual methods of work. His staff consisted of only two people; all work was mechanized. His network covered several countries and had an extensive network of agents in all walks of life. He managed to get the most accurate information from sources who worked in the highest echelons of the Russian army, and the intelligence department of the headquarters of the German army (FHO. - B.S.) highly appreciated them. This man did a really good job. He could report on major strategic plans, and on the movements of troops, sometimes even individual divisions. His reports usually arrived two or three weeks before the predicted events, so that our leaders had time to prepare appropriate countermeasures, or rather they could have done so if Hitler had paid more serious attention to such reports.

I had to fight desperately to protect such a valuable employee from Müller (Chief of the Gestapo. - B.S.), as well as to protect him from the envy and intrigues that existed in my department and at the headquarters of the Luftwaffe. Behind the backs of Kaltenbrunner and Müller there was a clique that decided to eliminate the "Jew". It was not only Jewish origin that was blamed on him. His enemies resorted to the most insidious tricks, trying to prove that he was secretly working for Russian intelligence, which supposedly provides us with reliable information so far in order to mislead us at the decisive moment.

Note that Schellenberg did not learn about the miracle resident until February 1944. By that time, this "so far" had already lasted for almost three years, during which the largest battles took place on the Eastern Front. Naturally, the head of German intelligence rightly objected to the enemies of the Jewish resident: what other such "decisive moment" should come for disinformation to finally come from him, if the information that came all the time from this source was basically confirmed ?!

In the German version of Schellenberg's memoirs, it is specified that "communication with two officers of the General Staff seconded to the headquarters of Marshal Rokossovsky" was maintained through one of the "especially important informants" and that after the merger of Canaris's department with the 6th Directorate of Schellenberg, his "order received more one very valuable informant led by a German Jew." Gelen also mentions the same resident, indicating that he had a radio post in Sofia and an Abwehr agent network in the Soviets under the general name "Max".

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@5

It was from "Max" that the FHO received, in particular, a report on the military council held by Stalin on November 4, 1942.

The biography of the head of "Max" is detailed by David Kahn. The name of the resident so valued by the leaders of German intelligence is Fritz Kauders. He was born in Vienna on June 23, 1903. Fritz's mother was Jewish. The father, according to Kauders, was a full-blooded Aryan who converted to Judaism, and then re-baptized - of course, if Kauders did not invent

this story about an Aryan father, in order to fall into the less dangerous category of half-breed Jews under the Nazis, "Mishleing". Until the end of the war, the supporters of the final solution of the Jewish question did not agree with each other what to do with the ill-fated "Mishleings". On the one hand, it would not be bad, without racking their brains, to send them straight to Auschwitz, but then it will turn out that undeniably Aryan blood will be affected by the eradication. This "problem" was never resolved until the inglorious end of the Third Reich, and therefore the "mishleing" was not touched. Concentration camps and gas chambers did not threaten them. But persons of dubious origin were not officially accepted to responsible government positions. In order to circumvent the unspoken ban on the admission of "Mishleinge" to senior positions in the Wehrmacht, they resorted to all sorts of tricks. For example, one of the closest employees of Hermann Goering himself, Field Marshal Erhard Milch, who held the high post of State Secretary of the Ministry of Aviation, was a typical "Mishleing" because his mother was Jewish. To avoid an ugly situation with his half-breed deputy, Goering forced Milch's mother to sign a document stating that Erhard was not her child, but her husband's illegitimate son. So the future field marshal turned into a 100% Aryan. Perhaps a similar scam was done with Kauders' father, so that such a useful resident "Max", already half-Aryan, could be trusted by the leaders of the Nazi state. At 24, Kauders moved from Vienna to Zurich, where he worked for some time as a sports journalist. Then he lived in Paris and Berlin, where he continued to engage in journalism, and along with some business. After Hitler came to power, Kauders left as a reporter for Budapest, where he found himself a profitable job - an intermediary in the sale of Hungarian entry visas to Jews fleeing Germany. He made contacts with high-ranking Hungarian officials, including those from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and at the same time met the head of the Abwehr station in Hungary and began working for German intelligence. Here, Kauders' acquaintance with the American consul in Zagreb, John Meili, was very useful, thanks to which he gained access to American diplomatic documents. And acquaintance with the Russian émigré general A.V. Turkul, who had his own agent network in the USSR, made it possible to obtain information about the Red Army and the internal situation of the country on the eve of June 22, 1941.

After the German attack on the Soviet Union, Kauders was tasked with collecting information from the main informants in Russia, the backbone of which was Turkul's agents. The Germans supplied them with radio stations and other equipment and established a regular flow of the necessary information. At the end of 1941, Kauders moved to Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, where he headed the Abwehr radio post, which received radio messages from agents in the USSR. But who these agents were, as well as the post-war fate of Kauders, has not yet been clarified.

Somewhat different than in the memoirs of Schellenberg and Gehlen or in the works

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services"@6

Cookridge and Whiting, a picture of the state of German agents in the USSR during the war years is drawn in his book "Intelligence and the Kremlin" by the already familiar Pavel Sudoplatov, who in the war years headed the intelligence and sabotage Fourth Directorate of the NKVD, and then the NKGB. Pavel Anatolyevich was involved in the organization of a number of radio games,

which were carried out by the Soviet side with the Germans. According to him, almost all the reports that are abundantly quoted in the works devoted to the successes of the Abwehr and the FHO were in fact disinformation prepared by the General Staff of the Red Army and the NKVD. The largest game was Operation Monastery. The Chekists imitated the existence of an underground pro-German anti-Soviet organization in order to identify German agents in our country.

Here it is worth giving the floor to Sudoplatov, one of the leaders of Operation Monastery. Come on, reader, patiently listen to his detailed story about one of the largest Chekist operations during the war years:

"... We decided to use as a bait a certain Glebov, the former leader of the noble assembly of Nizhny Novgorod. By that time, Glebov was already over seventy. This man was famous in the circles of the former aristocracy: it was he who welcomed the royal family in Kostroma in 1913 on the occasion of the solemn celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty. Glebov's wife was her man at the court of the last Russian Empress Alexandra Feodorovna. In a word, of all the surviving representatives of the Russian nobility, Glebov seemed to us the best candidate. In July 1941, he, almost a beggar, huddled in the Novodevichy Convent (hence the name of the operation - "Monastery". - B.S.) ...

Our plan was that Glebov and a second man, also of a noble family (he was our agent), would gain the confidence of the Germans. Our agent - Alexander Demyanov (Heine) and his wife, also an NKVD agent, visited the church of the Novodevichy Convent under the pretext of receiving a blessing before sending Alexander to the front in the cavalry unit. Most of the servants of the monastery were secret informers of the NKVD. During a visit to the church, Demyanov was introduced to Glebov. A cordial relationship developed between them; Demyanov showed an avid interest in the history of Russia, while Glebov had nostalgia for the past. Glebov valued the company of his new friend, and he began to bring other people who sympathized with Glebov and were eager to meet him to meet with him. These were either trusted representatives of the NKVD, or operational officers ...

Alexander Demyanov really belonged to a noble family: his great-grandfather Golovaty was the first chieftain of the Kuban Cossacks, and his father, an officer in the tsarist army, died a heroic death in 1915. Demyanov's uncle, his father's younger brother, was the head of counterintelligence for the White Guards in the North Caucasus. Captured by the Chekists, he died of typhus on his way to Moscow. Alexander's mother, a graduate of the Bestuzhev courses, a recognized beauty in St. Petersburg, was widely known in the aristocratic circles of the former capital. She received and turned down several invitations to emigrate to France. She was personally known by General Ulagai, one of the leaders of the White Guard emigration, who actively collaborated with the Germans from 1941 to 1945. (Here the Chekist General was somewhat mistaken both in the dates and in the facts. S. G. Ulagai, after he left his homeland, served in the Albanian army, and if he collaborated with anyone, it was with the Italians who occupied Albania. In this country, he is quiet and peacefully

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@U

died in April 1944, without, of course, physical

opportunities to continue cooperation with the Germans until 1945. - B. S. N). Alexander's own childhood was marred by images of terror - both white and red - that he had to watch during the civil war, when his uncle fought under the command of Ulagai.

After his mother refused to emigrate, they returned to Petrograd, where Demyanov worked as an electrician: he was expelled from the Polytechnic, where he entered, keeping silent about his past (at that time it was impossible for him to get a higher technical education due to non-proletarian origin). In 1929, the GPU of Leningrad, on the denunciation of his friend Ternovsky, arrested Alexander for illegal possession of weapons and anti-Soviet propaganda. In fact, the gun was planted. As a result of the action, Alexander was forced into tacit cooperation with the GPU. Due to his origin, he was aimed at developing connections between the nobles who remained in the USSR with foreign white emigration and suppressing terrorist attacks. By the way, in 1927, Alexander witnessed the explosion of the House of Political Education by white terrorists in Leningrad. Alexander began to work for us, using family connections.

Soon he was transferred to Moscow, where he got a job as an electrical engineer at Mosfilm. At that time, the cultural life of the capital centered around the film studio. Pleasant appearance and noble manners allowed Tsemyanov to enter the company of film actors, writers, playwrights and poets. He shared his room in a communal apartment in the center of Moscow with one actor of the Moscow Art Theater. We managed to arrange something quite rare for those times: from now on, he had his own horse in the Manege! Naturally, this circumstance expanded his contacts with diplomats. Alexander was friends with the famous Soviet director Mikhail Romm and other prominent cultural figures. The NKVD allowed an elite group of artistic intelligentsia and representatives of the former aristocracy to lead a secular lifestyle, without restricting them in anything, but some of these people were recruited, and the rest were carefully monitored in order to be used in the future if necessary ...

The appearance of Demyanov in the society of actors, writers and directors was so natural that he easily managed to make the necessary connections. He never concealed his origin, and this could be easily verified in the émigré circles of Paris, Berlin and Belgrade. In the end, Demyanov became seriously interested in the employees of the German embassy and the Abwehr.

On the eve of the war, Alexander reported that an employee of the German trade mission in Moscow, as if in passing, mentioned several names of people close to the Demyanov family before the revolution. Instructed accordingly... Demyanov did not show any interest in the words of the German: it was a clear attempt to start recruiting him, and in these cases one should not show excessive interest. Perhaps, from that moment on, he appeared in the operational records of German intelligence under some code name. Later, as can be seen from the memoirs of Gehlen, the chief of intelligence of the General Staff of the ground forces, he was given the name Max. (Here Sudoplatov is either wrong or deliberately distorts the facts: after all, Gehlen clearly writes in his memoirs that the name "Max" was assigned not to any specific agent, but to a whole series of agents - a residency led by Kauders. - B.S.) .

First contact with German intelligence in Moscow fundamentally

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services"@8

changed his fate: from now on, a special note appeared in his intelligence business ... This meant that in the event of a war with the Germans, Demyanov could become one of the main figures who would be interested in the German special services. By the beginning of the war, Alexander's agent experience totaled almost ten years. Moreover, it was about serious counterintelligence operations, when he had to contact people who did not think to hide their anti-Soviet convictions. At the very beginning of the war, Alexander signed up as a volunteer in the cavalry unit, but he was destined for a different fate: he became one of the most valuable agents placed at my disposal for special assignments. In July 1941, Gorkinsky, head of the Secret Political Directorate of the NKVD, and I turned to Beria for permission to use Demyanov, together with Glebov, to carry out Operation Monastery behind enemy lines. To give credibility to Operation Monastery, the poet Sadovsky and the sculptor Sidorov were involved in it, who at one time studied in Germany and were known to the German special services, their apartments in Moscow were used for secret communications.

Our idea was to create an active pro-German underground organization Throne, which could offer its assistance to the German high command, provided that its leaders receive appropriate posts in the new, anti-Bolshevik administration in the occupied territory. We hoped in this way to identify German agents and infiltrate the German intelligence network in the Soviet Union. The undercover files of "Throne" and "Monastery" quickly swelled, turning into multi-volume ones. Despite the fact that these operations were initiated and approved by Beria, Merkulov, Bogdan Kobulov and others, subsequently repressed by high-ranking officials of the state security agencies, they remain a classic example of high-level professionalism, entered textbooks and are taught, of course, without reference to the real names of those involved. In this operation, agents and operatives...

After careful preparation, Demyanov (Heine) crossed the front line in December 1941 as an emissary of the anti-Soviet and pro-German Throne organization. The German front group of the Abwehr reacted to the defector with obvious distrust. Most of all, the Germans were interested in how he managed to ski through the mined field. Alexander himself was unaware of the danger and miraculously survived. He was interrogated for a long time, demanded to report on the deployment of troops on the front line, then a staged execution was staged in order to force him, under pain of death, to confess to collaborating with Soviet intelligence. Having achieved nothing, Alexander was transferred to Smolensk. There he was interrogated by Abwehr officers from the Valleri headquarters. Distrust began to dissipate gradually. They believed Demyanov after they made inquiries about him among the Russian emigration and made sure that before the war he was not involved in intelligence operations conducted by the OGPU-NKVD through Russian emigrants. The Germans knew that the Russian emigration was stuffed with NKVD agents, who acted very effectively: many emigrants willingly cooperated with us out of patriotic considerations and a sense of guilt before their homeland. This made it possible to nullify all attempts by white emigration to carry out terrorist attacks and organize sabotage. In addition, it turned out that before the war, Abwehr agents made contact with him, developed him as a source, and in the Berlin dossier he appeared under the code name Max. Abwehr

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@9

made a bet on Max (I repeat that the identification of Demyanov and "Max" is pure Sudoplatov's mistake or fiction. - B.S.).

Alexander completed a course of study at the Abwehr school. The only difficulty for him was to hide that he knew how to work on the radio and knew the cipher business. The Germans were literally delighted that they had recruited such a capable agent. This also facilitated our work, since it could be thrown to our rear without a radio operator.

Now the Germans set specific tasks for Demyanov (Max): he had to settle in Moscow and create, using his organization and connections, an agent network in order to infiltrate the headquarters of the Red Army. His tasks also included the organization of sabotage on the railways.

In February 1942, the Germans parachuted Max into our territory along with two assistants. They chose the wrong time for this: in a snowstorm, all three lost each other and traveled from Yaroslavl to Moscow one by one. Alexander contacted us and quickly got used to the duties of a resident of German intelligence. Both assistants were soon arrested. The Germans began to send couriers to contact Max. We made most of these couriers double agents, and some were arrested. In total, we detained more than fifty agents of the Abwehr sent to communicate.

Alexander, as a scout, had the full support of his family, which was a great success for us. The details of his intelligence activities were known to his wife and father-in-law...

His wife Tatyana Berezantseva worked at Mosfilm as an assistant director and enjoyed great prestige among film and theater figures. Father-in-law, Professor Berezantsev, was considered a medical god in Moscow academic circles and was a leading consultant in the Kremlin clinics. He, one of the few specialists of this level, was allowed to practice privately. Berezantsev was also well known in the diplomatic corps, which was very important for us. At the time, he was in his fifties, highly educated, and spoke excellent German (he was educated in Germany), French, and English. His apartment was used as a safe house for the underground organization Throne, and later for contacts with the Germans. The NKVD understood that the Germans could easily check who lived in this apartment, and it seemed natural that the whole family, whose roots went back to the past of Tsarist Russia, could be involved in an anti-Soviet conspiracy.

At my suggestion, the first group of German agents were to remain at large for ten days so that we could check their appearances and find out if they had any connection with anyone else besides Alexander (Max). Beria and Kobulov warned me that if this group staged a sabotage or terrorist attack in Moscow, I would not be able to lose my head.

Alexander's wife dissolved special pills in tea and vodka, treated the German agents in her apartment, and while they were sleeping under the influence of sleeping pills, our experts managed to neutralize their hand grenades,

ammunition and poisons. True, some of the ammunition had a remote control, but experts believed that, in general, these agents were disarmed. Such operations at Alexander's apartment were a very risky business: the "guests", as a rule, were distinguished by excellent physical data and several times, despite the pills, unexpectedly woke up ahead of time.

To some German couriers, especially those from the Baltic states, we

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁰

allowed to return to the headquarters of the Abwehr, on the condition that they report on the successful activities of the German intelligence network in Moscow.

In accordance with the legend developed by us, we arranged Demyanov for the post of junior communications officer in the General Staff of the Red Army. As we developed fictitious sources of information for the Germans among the former officers of the tsarist army who served under Marshal Shaposhnikov, the entire operation turned into an important channel of disinformation. The radio game with the Abwehr became more and more intense. In the middle of 1942, Fischer-Abel was entrusted with the radio technical support of the game.

Meanwhile, Demyanov managed to create the impression that his group had sabotaged the railway near Gorky. In order to confirm the act of sabotage and strengthen the reputation of Alexander, we organized several press reports about sabotage in railway transport.

In the German archives, Operation Monastery is known as the "Agent Max Affair". In his memoir Service, Gehlen praises the role of Agent Max, the main source of strategic military information about the plans of the Soviet High Command during the most difficult years of the war. He even reproaches the command of the Wehrmacht for ignoring the timely messages transmitted by Max via radio transmitter from Moscow about the counteroffensive of the Soviet troops. We must pay tribute to the American intelligence services: they did not believe Gehlen and in a number of publications directly indicated that German intelligence fell into the trap of the NKVD. Gehlen, however, continued to adhere to his point of view, according to which Max's work was one of the most impressive examples of the success of the Abwehr during the war years.

The head of intelligence of the German security service, Walter Schellenberg, in his memoirs, claims that valuable information came from a source close to Rokossovsky. At that time, Max served in Rokossovsky's headquarters as a communications officer, and the marshal commanded the troops of the Belorussian Front. According to Schellenberg, an officer close to Rokossovsky was anti-Soviet and hated Stalin for being repressed in the 1930s and spending two years in prison.

Max's prestige in the eyes of the Abwehr leadership was really high - he received the Iron Cross with swords from the Germans. We, in turn, awarded him the Order of the Red Star.

Alexander's wife and her father were awarded medals "For Military Merit" for the risk in performing the most important tasks.

(Here again, a comment is needed. Sudoplatov is clearly deviating from the truth: after all, Gehlen, Schellenberg and other leaders of German intelligence praised and appreciated not the Russian, nobleman and double agent Alexander Petrovich Demyanov, but their resident Fritz Kauders, who collected and processed reports from many agents, including Demyanov - B.S.).

It is known from German archives that the Wehrmacht command made several fatal mistakes, in part because it relied entirely on Abwehr information received from sources from the Soviet Supreme High Command. The disinformation transmitted by Heine-Max was prepared in the Operations Directorate of our General Staff with the participation of one of its leaders, Shtemenko, then endorsed in the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff and transferred to the NKVD in order to ensure its receipt by convincing circumstances. As conceived by Shtemenko, important operations of the Red Army were indeed carried out in 1942-

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services.

1943, where they were "predicted" for the Germans by Heine - Max, but they had a distracting, auxiliary value.

Disinformation was sometimes of strategic importance. So, on November 4, 1942, Heine-Max announced that the Red Army would strike the Germans on November 15 not at Stalingrad, but in the North Caucasus and near Rzhev. The Germans were waiting for a blow near Rzhev and repelled it. But the encirclement of the Paulus group near Stalingrad came as a complete surprise to them.

Unaware of this radio game, Zhukov paid a heavy price: thousands and thousands of our soldiers under his command were killed in the offensive near Rzhev. In his memoirs, he admits that the outcome of this offensive operation was unsatisfactory. But he never found out that the Germans had been warned about our offensive in the Rzhev direction, so they threw so many troops there.

The disinformation of Heine-Max, as follows from the memoirs of Gehlen, also contributed to the fact that the Germans repeatedly postponed the offensive on the Kursk Bulge, and this was in the hands of the Red Army.

In a word, according to Sudoplatov, it turns out that practically all the information that came to the leaders of the German army and intelligence allegedly from the highest Soviet headquarters, in fact, was a carefully thought-out mixture of truth and lies, in the preparation of which he, Sudoplatov, took the most direct part. .

However, a number of questions immediately arise in his story - questions that, unfortunately, the recently deceased Pavel Anatolyevich will never be able to answer. Firstly, from the office of "Max" in Sofia, there were also completely accurate reports like the above-mentioned message from Minishkiy-Mishinsky, the appearance of which can in no way be explained by the goals of disinformation of the enemy. But what did Heine-Demyanov have to do with this? Secondly, Sudoplatov is mistaken when he considers the counter-offensive near Stalingrad, undertaken at the end of November 1942, a few days after the start of the turning point in the war,

the offensive of the Red Army on the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead with a distracting blow. In fact, this operation, called "Mars" (after the Roman god of war), involved even more troops and military equipment than in the Stalingrad counteroffensive, called "Uranus" (after the ancient Greek god of the sky). There is still a big question, which of the operations actually had a distracting character. I think that, rather, it's not "Mars" that suits this role, but "Uranus", which was launched a few days earlier and really riveted the attention of the German command to the Stalingrad area, so that after the start of Soviet attacks on Rzhev and Vyazma, the Wehrmacht leadership had no the ability to transfer any reinforcements to fight the advancing armies of Zhukov. And the goals of Operation Mars were just as, if not more, decisive than those of Operation Uranus: the defeat of Army Group Center and the subsequent large-scale offensive towards the Baltic coast and the borders of East Prussia. Stalin and other leaders of the Red Army still dreamed of crushing the enemy along the entire front and rapidly advancing to the borders of the Reich. But the attack on Rzhev and Vyazma ended in failure. Soviet strike groups themselves were surrounded and only with heavy losses, having lost almost all heavy weapons, made their way to their own. They were saved from complete defeat by the lack of forces among the Germans.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services "

The reasons for the unsuccessful offensive of the Western and Kalinin fronts are largely due to the lack of military leadership skills of Marshal G.K. Zhukov. His fame as a commander is a myth, refuted by the failure of a number of operations carried out under his leadership. After all, for example, not only this "Mars" offensive ended in failure, but also two others on the same Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead, in the spring and summer of 1942. Zhukov also failed because here he was confronted by German troops who were combat-ready and had managed to build a long-term defense, while in the Stalingrad counteroffensive the main success was achieved on the front of the Romanian armies, which were much less combat-ready and had not yet had time to properly gain a foothold in the recently occupied territory.

I must say that Marshal Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov during the Great Patriotic War, being the Deputy Supreme Commander in the Soviet military hierarchy, took second place after Stalin. It is quite natural, therefore, that sooner or later his name was to take the place that the name of Stalin had previously occupied in the Soviet mythology of the war. True, before this happened, several decades passed. It was necessary first to debunk the Stalinist "cult of personality", and then to return Zhukov from the disgrace that had befallen him under Khrushchev. But the mythological consciousness of the Soviet people persistently demanded some one, the main accomplisher of the Great Victory. And at the beginning of Gorbachev's perestroika, Zhukov, urgently turned into a "people's marshal", posthumously assumed the role of the first commander of the Great Patriotic War. But if the front-line soldiers loved him, then mainly from those who served in high headquarters. But few of the ordinary soldiers had a chance to express their fiery love to Georgy Konstantinovich, for he destroyed them senselessly and countless in poorly prepared frontal attacks. In his poem "On the Death of Zhukov," Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky said this very accurately:

How much soldier's blood he shed

To a foreign land! Well, did you mourn? Did he remember them, dying in a civilian white bed? Complete failure.

What will he say when he meets them in the infernal Realm?
"I fought."

I must say right away that from the point of view of military art, Zhukov fought poorly. Yes, and he could not fight well. Here, not only the lack of military education affected (the future marshal did not finish academies) - in the conditions of the Soviet system, people were considered just easily replaceable cogs of a huge state machine, and the generals were more afraid of the tyrant Stalin than a very strong, cruel enemy. In the same Brodsky we read about this: "... they boldly entered foreign capitals, but returned in fear to their own." The lives of soldiers who were not really taught to fight were not worth a penny. Under the Soviet regime it was impossible to fight not by numbers, but by skill. They fought precisely in numbers, literally flooding the enemy with the corpses of their own soldiers. Zhukov here, if he differed from the rest, it was in this worst sense. One can fully agree with the opinion of another marshal, A. I. Eremenko, back in February 1943 th who wrote in his diary: "It should be said that Zhukovsky's operational art is 5-6 times superior in strength, otherwise he will not get down to business, he does not know how to fight not in numbers and on blood

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

building his career.

And the commander-in-chief of the allied armies in Europe, American General Dwight Eisenhower, who sympathized with Zhukov and considered him his friend until the end of his life, was quite shocked by Zhukovsky's revelations, which he told in his memoirs:

"I was extremely struck by the description of the Russian method of overcoming minefields ... Marshal Zhukov told me about his practice, which, roughly speaking, boiled down to the following: "There are two types of mines: anti-personnel and anti-tank. When we come to a minefield, our infantry makes an attack as if this field does not exist. The losses that anti-personnel mines inflict on us in this case, we consider only equal to those that we would suffer from artillery and machine-gun fire if the Germans covered the area not with minefields, but with a significant number of troops. Attacking infantry does not detonate anti-tank mines, so when the infantrymen reach the far edge of the field, sappers go along the passage they have laid and make passages for vehicles in turn, removing anti-tank mines.

I vividly imagined what would happen if any American or British commander adopted such tactics, and even more vividly I imagined what people in any of our divisions would say if we tried to make such a practice part of our military doctrine. Americans measure the price of war in human lives, Russians - in the general cleansing of the nation. Russians clearly understand the value of morale, but in order to develop and maintain it, they need

achieve global success and support patriotism and even fanaticism.

As far as I could see, Zhukov paid little attention to methods that we considered vital to maintaining the morale of the American troops: the systematic rotation of units and the creation of conditions for them to rest, the provision of vacations, and above all the development of technology so as not to expose people to unnecessary risks on the field. combat, i.e., everything that was commonplace in the American army, but, it seemed, was unknown in the Soviet army subordinate to Zhukov.

The overwhelming majority of Zhukovsky's victories turn out to be either greatly inflated or completely imaginary. So, the famous report "The nature of the modern offensive operation" made by Zhukov at a meeting of the highest command staff at the end of 1940, as you know, opened the way for him to the post of chief of the General Staff. However, this report was written by Zhukovsky subordinates, the future Marshal, and then Colonel I. Kh. Bagramyan and Lieutenant Colonel G. V. Ivanov. Ivan Khristoforovich honestly reports this in his memoirs.

It is also foolish to relieve Zhukov of responsibility for the poor preparation for the war and for the failures of 1941, shifting them to Stalin alone. The first successful Zhukov operation - the capture of Yelnya in September 1941 - probably did more harm than good. At that time, the Germans delivered the main blow not to Moscow, but to Kiev, and the forces taken by Zhukov for the counterattack would be more expedient to use to repel the German offensive in the south and prevent the encirclement of the Soviet troops - the Southwestern Front. Georgy Konstantinovich arrived in Leningrad after Hitler had given directives not to take the city, confining himself to a blockade, so Zhukov was not really the savior of the northern capital. His three attacks on the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead in 1942, as already mentioned, ended

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

complete failures and cost great sacrifices. After one of them, which ended in death surrounded by a strike force led by General M. G. Efremov, a special report of the General Staff stated that the failure was entirely the fault of the commander of the Western Front, Zhukov:

"Forces and means were almost evenly distributed along the entire huge front. The loud orders given by the commander of the Western Front were impossible to carry out. Not a single order for the entire operation was carried out on time by the troops. They remained bare, unnecessary paper, which did not reflect the actual situation of the troops and did not represent a valuable operational document. And the haste shown by the command of the Western Front was transferred to the troops and brought great harm to the cause. Operations began unprepared, without close interaction between the branches of the armed forces, units were brought into battle in batches, in parts, they thwarted any surprise, if only to start the operation as soon as possible, without analyzing its further fate.

What a martial art!

Even the last operation of the war, the Berlin one, when the Soviet

superiority in people and technology was overwhelming, Zhukov carried out surprisingly mediocre, putting a mass of soldiers in a frontal assault on the enemy's fortified positions on the Seelow Heights. Moreover, this assault was, in fact, useless, since to the south the enemy defenses had already been broken through and the Germans would soon have left the Seelow Heights anyway. Well, Zhukov's idea during the night offensive to blind the enemy with the light of powerful searchlights brought only one harm. The blinding of the defenders of the Seelow Heights did not work out, but the enemy's battle formations of the attackers turned out to be perfectly visible, which only increased Soviet losses.

But let's return to Sudoplatov's book, to his story about the constant successes of the Soviet counterintelligence during the war years. Pavel Anatolyevich is mistaken when he writes that the undercover message about the decisions taken at the meeting with Stalin helped the Germans repel the November offensive on Rzhev. Not only were no reinforcements transferred by the German command to this direction during November, but, moreover, at the very moment of the attack, a planned regrouping of German troops took place here, which made it difficult at first to repulse the Soviet strike. Gehlen rightly lamented in his memoirs that, by correctly determining the strategic plans of the Soviet command, German intelligence could rarely accurately determine the time and direction of the attack.

Sudoplatov also does not mention that at the meeting with Stalin, according to the agent, it was about an offensive not only in the North Caucasus and near Rzhev, but also on the Middle Don, that is, ultimately, against the Stalingrad group of the enemy.

Sudoplatov is also mistaken about the Battle of Kursk. In Gehlen's memoirs, only undercover reports are given, indicating that already at the end of April 1943, the command of the Red Army was expecting a German offensive in the area of the Kursk salient. The chief of the FHO also cites his report of July 3, 1943, where he points out the possibility of a Soviet offensive on the Orel and the lower reaches of the Dnieper. Gehlen does not write anything about the fact that the information reported by the agents led to a delay in the start of Operation Citadel - the German offensive against Kursk. And the constant postponement of the German attack could not bring any tangible benefits to the Soviet side. In the area of the Kursk Bulge, the Red Army had a significant superiority of forces and means since April, but

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

hesitated, by decision of the leadership, called upon to first repel the expected German offensive. The fact that this offensive of the Wehrmacht was constantly postponed, in practice, left the Soviet command all the time for summer time, favorable for offensive operations. The German strike on the Kursk Bulge actually became preemptive, led to heavy losses of the Soviet troops and then forced them to launch their offensive in unfavorable groupings that had developed during the defensive battle.

It is obvious that Sudoplatov greatly exaggerates the strategic importance of the disinformation transmitted through Heine (Demmyanov), and besides, in all likelihood, he also refers to their number a number of reports published after the war, which had nothing to do with the operation "Monastery" and compiled in the Soviet headquarters, disinformation is not were.

I emphasize that much of what is told in the book "Intelligence and the Kremlin" looks quite plausible. For example, Sudoplatov's message that, upon his return to Moscow, Demyanov was appointed as a liaison officer in the General Staff of the Red Army. This fact immediately wants to be compared with Whiting's story about Major Bown's agent named Alexander, who in the same 1942 served in Moscow in the communications battalion with the rank of captain. However, the agent alias is strange in this case. In the Abwehr, they could not use the real name of the agent as a code name (assuming that Demyanov was that agent Alexander). Equally convincing at first glance seems to be the identification of Heine with the officer of Rokossovsky's staff, mentioned in Schellenberg's memoirs as a German agent. However, it is immediately necessary to make a reservation that the author of the "Labyrinth" is talking about not one, but two staff officers who served with the future "Marshal of Poland." In addition, most likely, it was from this source that the above report of May 3, 1944, which quite correctly outlined the plan of the Soviet offensive for the upcoming summer campaign, came from this source. If the nameless spy officer at the headquarters of the 1st Belorussian Front was in fact an NKVD officer, Demyanov, then why did he convey absolutely reliable information about the plans of the Soviet Supreme High Command? And why does Sudoplatov attribute to Schellenberg the assertion that the agent from Rokossovsky's headquarters was anti-Soviet and hated Stalin, because he spent several years in prison in Siberia, while the former chief of all German intelligence attributes all these qualities not to the agent, but, according to the latter, to himself K.K. Rokossovsky?

The flaws in Sudoplatov's memoirs are exacerbated by a number of obvious discrepancies with the facts reported by other authors who also wrote about A.P. Demyanov and Operation Monastery on the basis of documents and memoirs of its participants. For example, the journalist Lyudmila Ovchinnikova, who read, in particular, the notes of Demyanov's wife Tatyana Borisovna Berezantseva, in her publication "He received the Iron Cross and the Red Star in one operation", which appeared in Komsomolskaya Pravda on August 13, 1996, after the release of his memoirs Sudoplatov, gives a slightly different version of the military biography of agent Heine. According to Ovchinnikova, before crossing the front line in December 1941, Alexander Petrovich was listed as an employee of Glavkinoprokat (at least, this is how he introduced himself to the Germans interrogating him). Upon his return to Moscow, already as an agent of the Abwehr, Demyanov initially returned to his former place of work,

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services"
66

and soon informed his new masters that he had moved to the People's Commissariat of Railways (from there it was convenient to deliver disinformation under the guise of military transportation schedules). And indeed, it was inappropriate to invent a legend for a double agent, according to which he allegedly became a communications officer of the Soviet General Staff. Firstly, in order to justify such a position, Demyanov would in any case need, at least in radiograms addressed to the Germans, to inform about the end of the corresponding school. And this, even in wartime conditions, required no less than six months, when it would be difficult for Heine to convey any plausible disinformation. Secondly, a communications officer in the General Staff has a very large amount of various information and, in addition, has the ability to transmit a significant amount of it.

part is relatively safe - from a regular headquarters radio station, which, of course, it would not occur to anyone to take direction finding. And to quickly prepare such a huge amount of disinformation, well thought out and consistent with the real intentions of the Soviet command, I'm afraid, it was beyond the power of not only such a competent general staff officer as S. M. Shtemenko, but also the entire staff of the Intelligence and Operational Directorates of the General Staff. Therefore, it is unlikely that the leaders of the NKVD could choose such a hectic position for Demyanov. In this case, it was quite natural for the Germans that the agent supplies only fragmentary information that somehow became known to him. To prepare such disinformation was incomparable

easier.

According to Ovchinnikova, it was only in July 1944 that Demyanov told the Germans that he was being "taken into the army" and sent to a unit located near Minsk. Consequently, only from that time on he could play the role of an officer in the headquarters of Marshal Rokossovsky. However, Schellenberg clearly indicates in his memoirs that he became aware of the agents from Rokossovsky's entourage much earlier than July 1944, even before the head of the 6th Directorate of the Imperial Main Security Directorate "part-time" headed the Abwehr. And the report on Soviet plans for the summer campaign of 1944, which obviously came from the same source, was received, as we remember, before May 3, 1944 and, therefore, could not belong to Heine - Demyanov.

Operation "Monastery" is also devoted to the article of retired colonel V. V. Korovin "Duel with the Abwehr", published in the 1st issue of the "Military History Journal" for 1995. Its author, a former "fighter of the invisible front," claims that after the defeat of German troops near Moscow, "in order to mislead fascist intelligence, the state security organs decided to cover up the presence in Moscow of an anti-Soviet church-monarchist organization headed by the poet Sedov (surname changed. Sedov comes from the nobility-landowners, his wife is one of the former ladies-in-waiting of the Empress. - Note by V. V. Korovin) ... "

Being monarchists by conviction, Sedov and his wife also carried out anti-Soviet defeatist agitation in the circle of their close acquaintances. Sedov was monitored by Agent Stary, a former nobleman in whom he completely trusted. At one of the meetings, Sedov turned to the agent with a request to establish contact with the Germans, to which the latter (at the direction of the operative worker) agreed. After receiving an assignment from Sedov - to select persons for anti-Soviet work in Moscow - through the agent Stary, under the guise of a member of his group, he was introduced

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret fight of the secret service

the trusted agent Heine is also a native of the nobility (thanks to Sudoplatov and Ovchinnikova, we already know for sure that A.P. Demyanov worked under the pseudonym Heine. - B.S.). He knew well the subversive business, electrical and radio engineering. Having met with him several times, Sedov instructed him to cross the front line, inform the Germans about the existence of a church-monarchist organization in Moscow, and receive a task for further work.

In February 1942, Heine was transferred across the front line. Acting

in accordance with the legend developed, the agent told the Germans in detail who sent him to them and for what purpose, informed about the organization, its leaders and its anti-Soviet activities. As the organization's courier, Heine asked for directions for further work.

The fascist intelligence officers who interrogated the agent did not immediately believe him, tried to find contradictions in the legend and even staged the execution. However, Heine's endurance and the persuasiveness of the legend eventually led them to believe that they were dealing with a real enemy of the Soviet state. Within a month, the agent was trained in radio business and methods of encrypted correspondence, after which they were airlifted to the Soviet rear. Heine was instructed to collect and transmit to the fascist intelligence center information about the situation in Moscow, the food supply to the population of the capital, the operation of a number of military factories, the deployment and number of troops, their transfer through the Moscow railway junction and other espionage information. In general, the Nazis set the following tasks for the monarchist organization: to intensify anti-Soviet propaganda among the population, to launch subversive and sabotage activities, to create underground anti-Soviet cells of the monarchist organization in large industrial cities.

Upon returning from the rear of the enemy, Heine reported in detail to the head of the legendary organization Sedov about the results of his stay with the Germans and the assignment received. Soon, the Nazis began to receive radio messages about the "place of deployment" of some units of the Red Army. In order to strengthen Heine's position with the enemy, the counterintelligence authorities deliberately refrained from any requests to the Germans for four months and even rejected their proposal to send a courier to Moscow, citing the danger of failure.

According to Korovin, Heine sent a request to send a courier with a new transmitter instead of the old one that had fallen into disrepair only at the beginning of August 1942. From this we can conclude that he arrived in Moscow in early April, if we literally understand the words about four months when Soviet counterintelligence officers did not allow Demyanov to turn to the Abwehr for help. Here, the discrepancy in chronology between Sudoplatov and Ovchinnikova, on the one hand, and Korovin, on the other, is striking. The first two refer to December 1941 as the time of Heine-Demyanov's transition to the Germans, and Sudoplatov refers the agent's return to Moscow to February 1942. Korovin, on the other hand, moves the deadlines forward by two or three months. I am inclined to trust Sudoplatov more here, for whom Heine's check with the Germans, along with training in radio science, the art of encryption and other basics of intelligence work, took about three months, while the author of an article in the "Military Historical Journal" takes a little more than a month for everything. But as for the essence of the assignments received by Demyanov from the Germans, Korovin's story is more plausible, even if the retired colonel is much inferior in terms of style

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services"⁶⁸

general writer and professional journalist. Korovin's language is very close to the language of wartime documents, but this is what gives credibility to what he reports. The Abwehr gave assignments to Heine, obviously proceeding from the fact that he would remain in some kind of civilian job in Moscow, either due to armor, or because of his unfitness for army service as

health. Obviously, the Germans hoped that the agent would be able to obtain the information they were interested in from conversations with Muscovites and military personnel arriving in the city, as well as from his acquaintances and other members of the church-monarchist organization. German intelligence did not expect any sensational messages from Heine, and the Soviet side, one must think, was not going to send, realizing how difficult it is to legend qualified disinformation from an agent working in a responsible position in a high-ranking headquarters. According to Korovin, the main goal of the operation "Monastery" and the operations "Couriers" and "Berezino" that continued it was to capture couriers and agents of the Abwehr, and Sudoplatov and Ovchinnikova agree with him. That's just about the number of detainees with the assistance of Heine, the authors disagree. Sudoplatov speaks about 50 arrested agents and couriers, Korovin - about 23 agents, couriers and "accomplices", and Ovchinnikova claims that "until the end of 1944, Demyanov helped to capture 15 German intelligence officers who came to the turnout", and also learned the addresses of "several enemy agents operating in Moscow. True, the question arises: did the Germans trust Demyanov and did they, in turn, play some kind of game with him, sacrificing agents from former prisoners who were of no value to the Abwehr?

The last operation associated with Heine was named "Berezino". Three of our authors describe its move almost identically, differing only in some details. One of its main developers, Sudoplatov, speaks in most detail about it. Him and the word:

"On the eve of the summer offensive of the Red Army in Belarus, Stalin summoned the head of Intelligence Kuznetsov, the head of military counterintelligence SMERSH Abakumov, the People's Commissar of State Security Merkulov and me ... Stalin received us very coldly. He reproached for not understanding the realities of war and asked how, in our opinion, the "Monastery" and other radio games could be used to assist our army in offensive operations, and suggested expanding the scope of radio games, noting that the old techniques did not fit the new situation. Kuznetsov offered to plant new information through Heine-Max about an allegedly planned offensive in Ukraine. I was not prepared for this turn of the conversation and knew absolutely nothing about the plans of the Soviet Supreme High Command. In addition, I remembered the advice of Marshal Shaposhnikov, never get involved in matters that are outside your competence.

Let us interrupt Sudoplatov's story for the moment in order to draw the reader's attention to the following circumstance. Pavel Anatolyevich himself unwittingly destroys the structure he has just erected of grandiose strategic disinformation, supposedly constantly transmitted to the German side through Heine-Demyanov. Suddenly, in the summer of 1944, on the eve of the offensive of the Red Army in Belarus, it turns out that Stalin is dissatisfied with the fact that there is practically no falsified data through Heine that can help the Soviet offensive operations. However, as can be understood from Sudoplatov's memoirs, the proposal to send on behalf of Demyanov

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

disinformation about an allegedly impending strike in Ukraine did not meet with approval. Instead, as the former chief recalls

reconnaissance and sabotage department of the NKVD, the Supreme Commander gave a completely unexpected order:

"Stalin called General Shtemenko, Chief of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff, and he read out the order prepared before our conversation. In accordance with the order, we had to mislead the German command, creating the impression of active operations in the rear of the Red Army of the remnants of German troops who were surrounded during our offensive. Stalin's plan was to trick the Germans into using their resources to support these units and "help" them make a serious attempt to break through the encirclement. The scope and boldness of the proposed operation made a great impression on us ...

On August 19, 1944, the General Staff of the German Ground Forces received a message sent by the Abwehr from Max (Heine. - B.S.) that a unit under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Sherhorn, numbering 2,500 people, was blocked by the Red Army in the area of the Berezina River. Thus began the operation "Berezino" - the continuation of the operation "Monastery".

Operation "Berezino" was developed by the head of the 3rd department of the 4th directorate, Colonel I.V. Maklyarsky (like Sudoplatov, who was not alien to belles-lettres, he wrote the script for the popularly beloved film "The Feat of the Scout." - B.S.), I supported operation idea. A tempting radio game was planned with the German high command. In pursuance of the instructions of the Stavka, its plan was reported personally to Stalin, Molotov, and Beria. The operation was approved.

To direct this operation, Eitingon (the organizer of the assassination of L. D. Trotsky. - B. S.), my deputy Maklyarsky, Fisher (later the Soviet resident in America Rudolf Abel. - B. S.), Serebryansky and Mordvinov.

In reality, the Sherhorn group did not exist in the rear of the Red Army. The German formation under the command of this officer, numbering 1,500 people, defending the crossing on the Berezina River, was defeated by us and taken prisoner. Eitingon, Maklyarsky, Fischer, Mordvinov, Gudimovich and T. Ivanova, with the active participation of Heine-Max, recruited Sherhorn and his radio operators (he is taken aback: there are so many seasoned Chekists for one Heinrich Sherhorn - well, how can you resist! - B.S.). Soldiers and officers of the special purpose brigade were sent to Belarus. Together with them, German anti-fascist Cominternists arrived. The game also involved German prisoners of war recruited by Soviet intelligence. Thus, the impression was created that there was a real German group in the rear of the Red Army. So, from August 19, 1944 to May 8, 1945, we played perhaps the most successful radio game with the German high command. However, the operational workers who participated in the Berezino operation were not awarded either then, or in subsequent years, or on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Victory, although they were presented for the award.

The German security service and the general staff of the German ground forces were seriously plotting to disrupt the rear communications of the Red Army using the Scherhorn compound. To this end, Sherhorn, in response to his requests for help, was sent sabotage specialists and equipment. At the same time, we managed to capture a group of SS militants sent to communicate with Sherhorn.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services" 60

Sherhorn sent to Berlin reports on sabotage in the rear of the Red Army, written by Eitingon, Maklyarsky and Mordvinov. Max received an order from Berlin to check the accuracy of Sherhorn's reports about actions in the rear of the Red Army - he fully confirmed them. Hitler promoted Sherhorn to colonel and awarded him the Knight's Cross, and Guderian sent him a personal congratulation. Sherhorn was ordered to break through the front lines and advance into Poland and then into East Prussia. Sherhorn demanded that Polish guides collaborating with the Germans be dropped by parachute to support this operation, Berlin agreed, and as a result we captured Polish agents of German intelligence. Hitler, for his part, planned to send the head of the special operations and sabotage service Skorzeny and his group, but the Germans had to abandon this plan due to the worsening military situation on the Soviet-German front in April 1945.

On May 5, 1945, shortly before the end of the war, the command of the Wehrmacht and the Abwehr in their last telegram recommended Sherhorn to act according to the circumstances. Max was ordered to mothball sources of information and break off contacts with German officers and encircled soldiers who were threatened with capture, return to Moscow, hide and try to maintain their connections. We interned Sherhorn and his group near Moscow, where they were until they were released in the early 50s.

It is noteworthy that Gehlen, who headed the German military intelligence after Canaris, in an effort to gain the confidence of the Americans, offered Max as a reliable source after the war. However, US intelligence was distrustful of Gehlen's proposal.

In Ovchinnikova's essay, Heine's (Tsemyanov's) draft into the army in July 1944 is directly linked to the start of Operation Berezino, which is very similar to the truth. According to legend, in the village of Berezino near Minsk, he interrogated a captured German officer, who said that Lieutenant Colonel Sherhorn was hiding in the forests with two thousand soldiers and officers. About this Heine, this time playing the role of an officer-translator, radioed the Germans in mid-August. Ovchinnikova also cites data that the German command allocated a total of 255 containers with weapons, uniforms and food and about 2 million rubles of Soviet money for the Sherhorn detachment. The Chekists managed to capture 42 enemy agents sent to contact Sherhorn.

Sudoplatov claims that the plan to create false groups of German encirclement in the rear of the Red Army came from Stalin, and already within the framework of this plan, his subordinate I. Maklyarsky developed, and he, Sudoplatov, approved the Berezino operation plan. However, it is very doubtful that the initiative here came from the Supreme Commander. Indeed, apart from the Sherhorn group, no others were created (in any case, there is no mention of them either in Soviet or German publications). Did Stalin's order to create the impression among the Germans that many detachments of encircled heroes were actively operating in the Soviet rear gave rise to just one imaginary "Sherhorn regiment"? Why didn't the "fuhrer partisans" invented by the NKVD grow like mushrooms after a July rain? And why did those who so successfully carried out the order of the Supreme Sudoplatov and his associates never receive awards?

The answer to all these questions, it seems to me, is the same: in fact, the idea of the operation "Berezino" belonged entirely to Sudoplatov

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services.

management - no Stalinist order existed. Probably, the Headquarters and the General Staff agreed with the idea, deciding to see what would come of it, so to speak, in practice. It didn't turn out very well. In order to imitate the existence of Sherhorn's detachment, numbering about a regiment, in the forests near Minsk it was necessary to keep an elite brigade of the NKVD special purpose, and even a number of senior intelligence officers and anti-fascist Germans from the Comintern, dissolved by that time. Sense from Sherhorn was minuscule. No disinformation could be transmitted on behalf of the partisan lieutenant colonel. Indeed, according to legend, the detachment hid in the forests, dealt only with rear Soviet units and NKVD troops, and could not have any idea about the Red Army grouping at the front. It was also difficult for Sherhorn and the Chekists behind them to get any valuable information from the Germans. The German command could only inform the encirclement about where the front line was at the moment, but the Soviet Headquarters knew about this no worse than the leadership of the Wehrmacht. Of course, German weapons and especially food were a valuable gift for the participants in the Berezino operation, who, in all likelihood, were supplied almost entirely at the expense of the Wehrmacht (it's good if something also fell to the German prisoners of war involved in the operation). However, Stalin or Sudoplatov could not seriously expect that air supply for 8 months of one regiment would significantly weaken the Wehrmacht!

The capture of four dozen scouts and saboteurs (their number may be exaggerated) is undoubtedly a serious success, but it does not belong to the category of strategic ones at all, especially considering that German intelligence sent hundreds of agents to the rear of the Red Army every month.

Sudoplatov is also mistaken when he thinks that the German command planned with the help of the Sherhorn group to disrupt the communications of the Soviet troops. The German generals were not so naive and understood perfectly well that with one regiment, which, moreover, was experiencing an acute shortage of everything necessary, there was nothing to think of disrupting the supply lines of the Red Army. One thing is clear from Gehlen's memoirs and Whiting's book dedicated to him: the only goal of the Germans was to try to bring Sherhorn's encirclement to East Prussia, to their own, which, of course, had no strategic and tactical significance, but only humanitarian.

Sudoplatov's fantasy is also the assertion that Gehlen trusted Heine-Demyanov until the very last days and even recommended him to the Americans as a valuable agent. In fact, according to Whiting, the head of the FHO was from the very beginning very skeptical about the existence of the Sherhorn regiment. When the special reconnaissance groups sent to search for him either died or returned without finding any trace of the mythical lieutenant colonel, Gehlen came to the firm conviction that all this was a game of Soviet intelligence. And since the first message about Scherhorn came from Heine, the credibility of this agent, if it existed earlier, was with the head of the Foreign

armies - the East "(which, by the way, is far from a fact), turned out to be completely undermined. It was precisely because of Gehlen's skepticism about the story of Scherhorn that the leadership of the operation to supply the imaginary surrounded by Himmler's special order was transferred from the head of the FHO to Hitler's favorite, the most famous terrorist and saboteur of the Third Reich, Otto Skorzeny, who became famous for liberation from

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services?

conclusions of Benito Mussolini. The group sent by Skorzeny finally established contact with the elusive lieutenant colonel (only this time the Chekists managed to persuade the radio operator to cooperate).

Now, if it were possible to capture Otto Skorzeny himself, this, perhaps, would justify all the costs associated with the Berezino operation. But Mussolini's liberator did not fall into the KGB trap. In his memoirs, written already in 1948, in the hot pursuit of events, Skorzeny himself described in detail the story of Sherhorn:

"Shortly after a sensitive defeat in the June 1944 shamanic campaign on the central sector of the Eastern Front, a "reserve agent" made itself felt, in other words, an employee of one of the counterintelligence units that exist in any army, who had infiltrated the Russian rear at the beginning of the war (no doubt here we are talking about Heine - Demyanov. - B.S.).

The soldiers, who wandered through the forests for weeks in the territories occupied by the Russians and managed to get through to their own, reported on entire detachments that were surrounded. Then our contact crossed the front line and handed over to the scout the order to "reopen" and the task itself. And finally, a radiogram: "Groups of surviving German soldiers are flocking to the forest area north of Minsk."

About two thousand people under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Sherhorn were in the area indicated very vaguely. The scout was immediately ordered to establish radio contact with the hidden detachment, informed the appropriate frequencies and code, but so far all attempts have remained in vain. Apparently Sherhorn did not have a transmitter. The commander-in-chief had already considered it impossible to find and return the detachment. He was advised to seek help from my "special units".

"Are you able to complete such a task?" - asked the officers who met me at the Fuhrer's headquarters.

I gave an affirmative answer with good reason and knew that these officers and their colleagues would be happy to return their friends lost in the whirlpools of the Russian tsunami. That same evening, I returned by plane to Friedenthal (where Skorzeny's subordinates were located for special purposes. - B.S.), and we set to work. In a matter of days, we developed a plan, codenamed "The Poacher", and set about solving countless technical problems ... Our project involved the creation of four groups, each of which consisted of two Germans and three Russians. The people were armed with Russian pistols and provided with food supplies for four weeks. In addition, each group took with them a tent and a portable radio station. Just in case, they were dressed in

Russian military uniforms, provided with certificates and passes, etc. They were accustomed to Russian cigarettes, each in a duffel bag had a few slices of black bread and Soviet canned food. All passed through the hands of a hairdresser, who cut them almost bald in accordance with Russian military fashion, and in the last days before the flight they had to part with all hygiene items, including even razors.

Two groups were to jump from planes east of Minsk, almost exactly in the middle between the cities of Borisov and Cherven, move west and explore the endless forests in this area. If Sherhorn's detachment could not be found, it was necessary to independently get to the front line. According to the plan, the other two groups were supposed to land between Dzerzhinsk and Vitya, approach Minsk and

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶³

rummage through a vast sector up to the city itself. If the search proved fruitless, they too should have made their way to the front line.

We have been aware that this plan is only a theoretical guide, and we have given all groups sufficient leeway; the initial uncertainty did not allow foreseeing all the details of the operation, and therefore they were given the right to act at their own discretion, in accordance with the circumstances. We had to rely on radio communications, which made it possible, if necessary, to transmit new instructions. After the discovery of Sherhorn's detachment, an airstrip should have been built in the forest he occupied. Then it would be possible to gradually evacuate the soldiers by aircraft.

At the end of August, the first group under the leadership of P. took to the air on the "Heinkel-111" from the 200th squadron. With feverish impatience we waited for the return of the plane: after all, we had to fly more than 500 kilometers over enemy territory (by that time the front line passed near the Vistula). Since such a flight could only take place at night, the fighters could not escort the transport aircraft. On the same night, a radio communication session took place between the intelligence officer (that is, the Soviet agent Demyanov. - B.S.) and P.

"Bad landing," our paratroopers reported. Let's try to split up. We are under machine-gun fire."

The message ended there. Perhaps I had to retreat, leaving the transmitter. The nights passed one after another, and only the faint crackle of atmospheric noise came from the radio. Nothing else, no news from P's group. Bad start! (P.'s group, undoubtedly, was ruined by the fact that she entered into radio contact with Heine and was immediately spotted by the Chekists. - B.S.)

At the beginning of September, the second group set off, under the command of graduate student S. Upon returning, the pilot reported that the paratroopers jumped exactly at the indicated place and reached the ground without incident. However, for the next four days and nights, the radio was silent. There was only one explanation left: another failure, another disaster. But on the fifth night, our radio, from which everyone tirelessly waited for the manifestation of at least some signs of life, caught the answer. First, the tuning signal went, then a special signal, which meant that

our people got in touch without interference (not an extra precaution: the absence of such a signal would mean that the radio operator was captured and forced to get out of communication by force). And more great news: Sherhorn's detachment exists and graduate student S. managed to find it! The next night, Lieutenant Colonel Sherhorn himself said a few simple words, but how much a restrained feeling of deep gratitude was in them! Here is the finest of rewards for all our efforts and anxieties! (Skorzeny and his people received this "reward" only due to the fact that S. turned out to be more accommodating than P., agreeing to join the radio game and enabling Sudoplatov to continue the Berezino operation. - B.S.)

A day after the group S., the third five flew out, with non-commissioned officer M. at the head. We never found out what happened to them. Over and over again, our radio operators tuned in to their wave, repeated call signs ... Long, agonizing weeks ... There was no answer. M.'s group disappeared into the boundless Russian expanses.

Exactly twenty-four hours later, after the M. group, the fourth group, commanded by R., went on a mission. For four days they were in regular contact. After landing, we moved towards Minsk, but

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁴

they could not strictly adhere to this direction, since now and then they ran into Russian military patrols. Sometimes they met deserters who mistook them for comrades in misfortune. In general, the majority of the population in this part of Belarus was quite friendly towards us. On the fifth day, the communication session was suddenly interrupted. We did not even have time to tell them the coordinates of Sherhorn's detachment (this is what saved R.'s group! - B.S.). The anxious, unbearably long wait stretched again. Every morning, Volkensam (Chief of Staff Skorzeny. - B.S.) sadly announced: "No news from groups R., M. and P." Finally, three weeks later, we received a telephone message from somewhere in the Lithuanian border area: "R.'s group crossed the front line without loss." As expected, R.'s report is extremely interested in the intelligence services. After all, the cases of the return of German soldiers from the territories occupied by the Russians were extremely rare. R. especially emphasized the ruthlessness with which the Soviet commanders put into practice the principle of total war, mobilizing all forces, and, if necessary, using even women and children. If there were no free vehicles, the local civilian population had to roll barrels of fuel for many kilometers, sometimes almost to the line of fire, or pass shells in a chain directly to artillery positions. Undoubtedly, we had a lot to learn from the Russians.

Disguised as a lieutenant of the Red Army, R. had the courage to sneak into the officers' canteen and get dinner. Thanks to his impeccable knowledge of the Russian language, he was beyond suspicion. A few days later, R. reached our forward units, completely saving his group.

Now we had to meet the most urgent needs of Sherhorn's detachment, which had been in complete isolation and deprived of literally everything for more than three months. Sherhorn asked first of all for more medicines, dressings and a doctor. The first doctor to jump with a parachute crashed on landing in the dark,

broke both legs and died a few days later (this trick was required to lure another doctor from the Germans. - B.S.). The next one got lucky and landed unharmed. Then we began to dump food and clothing for the small army. From the report of the doctor it followed that the condition of the wounded was deplorable, and Sherhorn was ordered to immediately begin preparations for the evacuation.

For two or three nights, 200 Squadron sent out several aircraft to supply the camp lost in the forest. Unfortunately, the night drop of materials could not be accurate: often parachuted containers landed in inaccessible places or remained undetected in the forest thickets, although Sherhorn's soldiers conducted continuous searches. In the meantime, together with the squadron's specialists, we prepared an evacuation plan, deciding to use as an airfield a vast forest clearing, discovered not far from Sherhorn's camp. It was decided to carry out the operation in October, during the period of the darkest, moonless nights, planning first of all to take out the wounded and sick on planes, and only then the healthy ones.

A specialist was sent to Sherhorn to quickly deploy runways in the field. But as soon as the preparatory work began, the Russians, with a powerful air strike, made the chosen place unusable (for the Sherhorn detachment did not exist in nature, and there was no one for the Chekists to evacuate - not to send to

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁵

Germany, under the guise of Sherhorn soldiers, OMSBON fighters and anti-fascist Germans, after injuring them in order to deceive Skorzeny's people? - B.S.). I had to find another way. After negotiations with Sherhorn, it was decided that the detachment should leave the discovered camp and make a 250-kilometer march to the north. There, in the vicinity of Dunaburg (Daugavpils), near the former Russian-Latvian border, there were several lakes that froze in early December. When the ice is strong enough, the lakes will turn into suitable airfields for transport aircraft.

To make such a long journey behind enemy lines is not an easy task. Sherhorn suggested dividing the detachment into two marching columns. First, under the command of my graduate student S., it was necessary to go directly to the north, acting as a reconnaissance vanguard. The second, under the command of Sherhorn, was supposed to go in a parallel course, but a little behind. It was necessary to provide people with warm clothes and other necessary materials. For two thousand people, such an operation required a huge number of sorties. We sent them nine transmitters so that in the event of a forced division of the detachment, each unit would have contact with the others and with us.

In the late autumn of 1944, the columns slowly moved north. There were few Russian carts; the sick and wounded could hardly fit on them. Who could, went on foot. The transition turned out to be much longer than we expected. On average, they covered 8-12 kilometers per day. Sherhorn was forced to stop the detachment every now and then to rest for a day or two, and then it was not possible to cover even forty kilometers in a week. On the other hand, there were bloody clashes with Russian military patrols, the number of dead and wounded grew every day, and the pace

progress naturally declined. Little by little, all of us, who managed to get to know the Russians well, lost our last hopes. Scherhorn's chances of returning to Germany were terribly slim.

As the detachment moved towards the front line, the route of the supply aircraft was shortened, but it became more difficult to determine the place of the drop. By radio, we tried to clarify their coordinates on a map dotted with different icons. Despite the precautions, a myriad of bales and containers fell into the hands of the Russian police, which, to their credit, coped with their task (one might say, beating off bread and stew from Sudoplatov's people involved in the Berezino operation. - B. S.). But even that was not our main concern. Every week the amount of fuel allocated to 200 Squadron steadily decreased, while our needs for it did not decrease at all. From time to time I managed, by way of exception, to grab an additional 45 tons, but each new request ran into more and more difficulties. Despite Sherhorn's desperate entreaties, the number of resupply flights had to be reduced. I think that neither Sherhorn nor his soldiers, who made their way through the Russian forests in incredibly difficult conditions, were able to understand our problems (the Chekists did not understand them at all. - B.S.). To support their spirit, their faith in our desire to help with all the means at our disposal, I tried to show unchanging optimism at every radio session.

In February 1945, I myself had to command a division on the Eastern Front. While repulsing the fierce attacks of the enemy, I do not lose sight of our "special missions". The messages still coming regularly from Sherhorn were full of desperation: "Send planes... Help us..."

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services" 66

Don't forget us..." (I don't know who composed the texts of the radiograms on behalf of Sherhorn - Sudoplatov himself, his subordinates Maklyarsky and Eitingon, or someone else, but it's safe to say: a real playwright died in the author of these passionate appeals; however, Maklyarsky became a screenwriter after the war. - B. S.) The only good news: Sherhorn met P.'s group, the first of four abandoned groups, which was considered to have disappeared without a trace in August 1944. In the future, the content of the radio messages became a complete torture for me. We were no longer able to send more than one plane a week. The round-trip flight exceeded 800 kilometers. Yes, and the amount of goods sent was melting before our eyes. Day and night I racked my brains, looking for ways to help people who hadn't broken down, hadn't laid down their arms. But what was to be done?

By the end of February, they stopped allocating fuel to us. At the mere thought of its huge stockpiles captured by the enemy in the course of the offensive, I was overcome with rage. At each of the Warthegau airfields (the territory of the Polysa in the region of the Warta River, attached to the Reich. - B.S.), occupied by the Russians, there were several hundred tons of aviation fuel!

On February 27, graduate student S. sent us the following message: "The detachment has arrived in the designated area near the lakes. Without immediate support, we will starve to death. Can you pick us up?" (Obviously, the leaders of Operation Berezino were already planning to

turn off, but expected to get hold of a couple of German transport aircraft before the curtain, but the acute shortage of fuel in the Luftwaffe prevented them from implementing this plan. - B.S.)

As the transmitter batteries were used up, the calls for help became more and more insistent, and we were no longer able to help. At the end, S. asked to deliver at least batteries for the transmitter (so as not to spend Soviet batteries on the radio game, which ours were in short supply. - B.S.): "We don't ask for anything else ... just talk to you .. only hear you."

The collapse and incredible chaos that struck many services finally finished us off. There could be no question of a plane taking off with help for the unfortunate, much less their evacuation.

And all the same, our radio operators did not take off their headphones all night long. Sometimes they managed to detect the negotiations of Sherhorn's groups among themselves, sometimes their desperate pleas reached us. Then, after May 8, nothing more broke the silence on the air. Sherhorn did not answer. Operation Poacher ended in vain.

Of course, if the operation "Berezino" led to the capture of Otto Skorzeny, Sudoplatov could count on the Gold Star of the Hero, and the rest of its participants could safely prepare holes in their uniforms for new orders. However, Skorzeny himself in his memoirs does not say anything about his intention to visit Sherhorn. And what was he to do there? After all, Skorzeny was neither a doctor nor an expert in the arrangement of field airfields, and this time it was not required to kill or kidnap any of the enemies.

The supply of the "Sherhorn detachment" in the required volume could not be established, because by the end of 1944, the Anglo-American aviation had almost completely destroyed the German factories for the production of synthetic gasoline, and the Luftwaffe aircraft were chained to the ground. When, after February 1945, communication with Sherhorn was interrupted,

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services6U

Skorzeny promised the Knight's Cross to one of his people who would restore it. And one of his agents, shortly before the end of the war, sent a radiogram from Sherhorn (or rather, from a Soviet prisoner of war camp), thereby earning the highest award of the Reich just before the surrender of the Wehrmacht.

Skorzeny, Guderian and other leaders of the German army saw in the case of Scherhorn a powerful means to strengthen the morale of the troops. By and large, it was not so important for them whether the detachment of Heinrich Sherhorn really existed or was invented by the Chekists from the very beginning. In any case, the colonel-hero performed the role assigned to him in maintaining hope for a better outcome of the war among the generals, officers and soldiers of the Wehrmacht.

Well, the Soviet High Command eventually realized that the game was not worth the candle: repeating the experience with the "Führer partisans" is difficult, expensive and pointless, since the Soviet side, at best, remains, as they say, "with its own" and, which is already not good, helps to strengthen the morale of the enemy. So reward

Sudoplatov, Maklyarsky, Eitingon and others really had nothing to do with it. And in vain Pavel Anatolyevich was offended.

The Sherhorn story had an unexpected epilogue. Here is what Sudoplatov says:

"I had a plan to use Scherhorn to recruit the German Admiral Raeder, commander of the naval forces, suspended by Hitler from his duties in 1943. While in captivity, Raeder was in Moscow. Later, at his request, his wife came to Moscow. He seemed willing to cooperate with us in exchange for a promise not to charge him as a war criminal at the Nuremberg trials, although the British side insisted on bringing him to trial for operations by German submarines against the British fleet and unarmed merchant ships.

I settled him with his wife at my dacha, but soon became convinced that my plan of influencing the admiral through Sherhorn was unrealistic, since they turned out to be incompatible with each other. He acted more favorably on Admiral Serebryansky (an employee of Sudoplatov. - B.S.), who was at my dacha under house arrest as a "prisoner of war" (he played the role of a German businessman). Serebryansky managed to convince the admiral to renew his acquaintances and connections in Germany. Raeder, "I remember, really liked walking along the Moskva River in a captured Horch limousine - that's exactly what he had in Germany.

At the end of 1945 we sent Raeder to Germany. The British side continued to insist on bringing him to trial as a war criminal. As far as I remember, we reached an agreement with the British and Americans on this issue. Raeder, several other senior officers of the German Navy and another group of officers were transferred to the allies in exchange for the former tsarist general Krasnov, who commanded the Cossack army in the civil war, and served in the Wehrmacht headquarters in World War II, and Soviet officers who fought in Vlasov's army. Sherhorn was also returned to Germany, and my connections with these people were cut off.

As for Sherhorn, Pavel Anatolyevich is absolutely accurate. The name of the colonel is on the list of officers who were repatriated ahead of schedule to East Germany in the late 1940s to work in the "People's Police". But Sudoplatov is confusing something with Reder. Krasnov, Shkuro and other emigrant generals, as well as Vlasov and a significant part

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁸

Vlasovites, the Allies handed over to Stalin back in May 1945. Raeder was sent to Nuremberg only at the end of 1945. It doesn't look like an exchange. Rather, Sudoplatov and other leaders of state security realized that it would still not work to keep Raeder behind them. At the Nuremberg trials of the main Nazi war criminals, he will inevitably be discussed, and the Grand Admiral will be required to be put on trial, especially since his successor, Karl Doenitz, was already in the hands of the Western allies. Moscow could not hide a person accused in such a trial.

Alexander Petrovich Demyanov now, thanks to numerous

publications known throughout the country and far beyond its borders. After the war, according to Sudoplatov, they tried to use him to introduce Russian emigration into the environment, but the emigrants in Paris did not make contact with him, perhaps already guessing about his connections with the state security agencies. Demyanov died in Moscow in 1975 at the age of 64 from a heart attack. But as for the fate and real names of other members of the Throne organization created by the NKVD, the Chekists were silent until recently. Only on September 7, 1999, in the documentary film "Leash for the Abwehr. Case of 1944" with reference to the archives of the Lubyanka, it was confirmed that in the Novodevichy Convent Heine-Demyanov met with "a certain Boris Sadovsky". It is possible that in Sudoplatov he appears under the pseudonym Glebov, and in Korovin as the poet Sedov. However, was Sadovsky really the head of Throne? Here I want to state one hypothesis as to who the person was in reality, who, by the will of the authorities, was recorded as the leader of the "church-monarchist organization."

The temptation immediately arises to identify him with the old man Glebov, who is mentioned by Sudoplatov. However, the author of the book "Intelligence and the Kremlin" nowhere says that the former leader of the Nizhny Novgorod nobility is a poet. Ovchinnikova is also silent about this. Among the members of the organization, Sudoplatov, however, names one poet - Sadovsky, but not at all as a leader. Meanwhile, if Korovin's message is true that the leader of the "church-monarchist organization" created with the blessing of the Chekists, Sedov, was a poet, then for this role in Moscow in 1941 one could find - without the knowledge of the candidate - quite a suitable candidate. This is the son of the famous writer, the poet Daniil Leonidovich Andreev, a wonderful person, the author of the philosophical, mystical treatise "Rose of the World", already published today, which has now gained great popularity in Russia. In the pre-war and war years, he really was the head of a religious and philosophical circle, the members of which were distinguished by their adherence to the monarchy and pro-German sentiments.

Daniil's father, the writer Leonid Andreev, is the illegitimate son of the Oryol landowner Karpov and the courtyard girl Glafira. Therefore, the family of the author of "Russian Gods", "Iron Mystery" and "Rose of the World" can really be traced back to a noble landowner, like Korovin's Sedov family.

True, there is a clear problem with Daniil Andreev's wife: she has never been a maid of honor. But let us remember that Glebov's wife, as Sudoplatov testifies, "was her man at the court of the last Russian Empress Alexandra Feodorovna." Or maybe the "maid of honor of the Empress" is a Chekist invention to give solidity to the version with the operation "Monastery" in the eyes of journalists and readers?

By the way, judging by the photographs, Daniil Andreev turned gray early,

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁹

which, perhaps, led the Chekists to the idea of assigning him an appropriate pseudonym.

Andreev spoke about his circle in the unfinished novel "Wanderers of the Night", confiscated during his arrest in 1947 as "material evidence" and disappeared without a trace in the bowels of the Lubyanka (however, as

to know, maybe they will still be found, after all, it is said: "manuscripts do not burn"). The very title of the novel symbolized the night that had fallen over Russia, and the Russian people wandering in that night into the light of a distant star. The poet's widow, Alla Alexandrovna, conveys the content of The Wanderers of the Night in this way: "In Moscow frozen in horror, under the vigilant gaze of all the windows of the Lubyanka, brightly lit all night, a non-sick group of friends is preparing for the time when the oppressive tyranny collapses and the people, starving in a wingless and terrible epoch, spiritual food will be needed most of all. Each of these dreamers prepares for what is to come in their own way. A young architect, Zhenya Morgenstern, brings drawings of the temple of the Sun of the World, which should be built on Sparrow Hills. (By the way, on the very spot where the new university was built.) This temple becomes, as it were, a symbol of the whole group. It is crowned with a cross and has one more emblem: a winged heart in a winged sun.

The leader, Indologist Leonid Fedorovich Glinsky (a tribute to Daniel's passionate love for India), was the author of an interesting theory of the alternation of red and blue eras in the history of Russia. The colors - red and blue - are conditional, but this convention is understandable: blue as the primacy of the spiritual, mystical principle, red - the pressure of the material (later this theory was embodied in the "Rose of the World").

But not only in the prose of Daniil Andreev his spiritual moods, hopes and aspirations are drawn. Of course, someone else's soul is darkness. But Andreev's persistent appeal to the same theme in the verses of the pre-war and war years suggests that for the future author of the "Rose of the World" one of the most important is the question of how to get rid of "pressing tyranny" in a war with another, no less terrible, but "foreign" tyranny - the tyranny of Hitler. Here is what, for example, Daniil Andreev wrote before the start of the Great Patriotic War in a 1941 poem entitled "Enemy after Enemy" about the role of Germany and Hitler in those cataclysms of history, of which the poet is a contemporary:

Enemy after enemy.

In the muddy West

Behind the Rhone, the Bug, the Danube and
the Neman Another, the most terrible demon looks - the
Hundred-legged octopus of the evening countries:

He established himself as a commandment,

He draws a plan, pushes the deadlines,

And in those who are called as false prophets -
Pushes his Koran with coal.

He rules the savage typhoons, Commands
the thunders... He is here, at the door, - The ram
people of foreign empires,

He is adamant, rude and proud...

He is drunk with victories, triumphs,

He howls the anthem, raises the flags,

And into the citadel of sacred Prague
Enters the tread of cohorts.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services"

The time has come, and the ram people tried to push their Koran with coal into the empire of
the false prophet Stalin. Daniil Andreev responded to the German invasion with the poem "Squall":

One thunderous word roars from
Reims to Lvov; Jagged, decrepit and
rusty, The castles of Warsaw are
shaking. Like a robot, like rock,
steady, Columns, columns, columns
Widen, obedient to the vow,

To the east, to the east, to the east.

Seer? Prophet? Usurper? A player
counting moves?

He really - the world emperor, the Receptacle
of the Spirit of the people?

Like a ghost, across the horizon

From the front he rushes to the front, He
talks with the genius of the race
with his own eyes in a furious night.

But in a strange and alien expanse Snow
fields lie down,

And look with mysterious eyes

Both the Angel and the Demon of Russia.

And the legionnaires move

Into the abyss without end and measure,

In the fields, boundless eye, -

To the east, to the east, to the east.

Here the poet ponders whether Hitler is really "the receptacle of the Spirit of the people" or an
ordinary gambler - a usurper? Are his legions destined to win or will they ingloriously perish in the
abyss of Russian fields "without edge and measure"? But in the next poem, "Refugees", Andreev
gives a detailed panorama of the dramatic events that followed the German invasion of Russia. And
this panorama

enlarges before our eyes, illuminated by symbolic reflections:

Kyiv fell. The banner of Odin is getting closer.

To the east to escape, to the east!

There is a prison. But in prisons the Motherland is dormant, the
Spinner-mother of all destinies and roads.

The roar of destruction rolls in the woods.

'Trails are not visible in the smoky veil... Omnipresent
rumble in the sky

Like chills running down your back.

They don't bury. Once. And no one. To the east,
beyond the Volga, beyond the Urals!

There Russia beyond the native rivers Five
centuries the enemy did not trample!...

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services03.

Nags. People. Tank. Trucks. A hundred-voiced
hubbub over the highway... Dragging guys,
bundles, bags, Sleeping on a trampled lane.

Summer fades. Black mud Squishes under
thousands of feet. The blizzard is spinning
and spinning, Sweeping the roads to the east. The
sky is burning back

It bleeds the edge of ice on the stubble, Like the
purple of a formidable judge,

Like the trumpets of the Last Judgment.

In hospitals, on platforms, decks, Among the streets and in
the snow of roads

Eternal sleep, quenching groans and complaints, The
beggarly East is preparing them. Too animal
life is scarce! The heart is too dull and dead.
Everyone drinks their fate to the bottom,

I don't believe in anyone, in anyone.

Musty provinces stirred,

Cities swept in the rear.

In the surviving temples at vespers they cry
prostrate on the worn floor:

About those who died in the battles for the East,
About those who went into the distant snows

And about the fact that the homeland-prison
is unlocked by the hand of the enemy.

The poet loves Russia endlessly, and sees the exodus of refugees to the east connected with the German invasion as the threshold of the Last Judgment. But what is this Last Judgment in the fate of the Motherland? Is it possible that a "foreign tyrant" will be the ruler of Russia? So what, to remain inactive, to reconcile with the fact that "the homeland-prison is unlocked by the hand of the enemy"? What a complex and, in essence, hopeless conflict: after all, one prison, Stalin's, will be replaced by another, Hitler's. Daniil Andreev understood that Hitler also brings not freedom, but slavery - that is why Andreev's poems of wartime are so tragic, gloomy, although majestic.

After the poet had to drink to the bottom the cup of fate in the form of a long-term camp term, after history proved the unviability of a state built on cannibalistic racial theory, and the Third Reich disappeared from the face of the earth, in the "Rose of the World" the characterization of the "world emperor" is already different : Hitler's empire for Andreev has now become "the tyranny of the demon of great power", where the Cathedral Soul was buried under the blocks of statehood. However, in this book, Andreev invariably evaluates the personality of Hitler higher than the personality of Stalin. He, in particular, claims: "Even Hitler and Mussolini were not devoid of personal courage. They appeared at parades and holidays in open cars, during the war they showed up on the front lines more than once, and once Hitler on the Russian front, caught by the sudden appearance of an enemy tank column, barely escaped capture. Stalin during the entire period of his reign

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services "

never showed a glimmer of personal courage. On the contrary, he was forever shaking for his physical existence, erecting an impenetrable wall around him to the very heavens. Surely such assessments of Hitler were common in the Andreevsky circle in the pre-war and war years.

It is hard to imagine that Andreev and his comrades were not interested in the competent authorities and did not bother to send their informants to them. And the latter certainly could not but consider the conversations taking place in the circle as anti-Soviet and pro-German and did not report it to the right place. Such information could have prompted Sudoplatov and his colleagues the idea of legendizing the underground organization Throne, which sympathizes with Germany.

It must be said that in their memoirs the Chekists speak in detail only about Heine-Demyanov, characterizing other members of the organization very sparingly and contradictorily - both their secret agents and real, staunch opponents of Soviet power. Apparently, in the future, some of the informants, the need for which has already disappeared,

were arrested as unnecessary witnesses along with other members of the Andreevsky circle and received camp terms, which neither Sudoplatov nor Korovin, of course, were eager to remember. It seems quite probable that the agent of the NKVD, nicknamed Stary, was in fact ... Glebov, who by the beginning of the war was over seventy. It is also possible that Sudoplatov called the members of the Throne organization not by their real names, but by the pseudonyms under which they appeared in the documents of the NKVD. If this is so, then it is possible to compare the persons named by Sudoplatov with specific members of the Andreevsky circle. For example, the poet Sadovsky, who knew Alexander Blok well, could actually become a close friend of Daniil Andreev through Blok's second cousin, the poet Alexander Viktorovich Kovalensky, who was part of the Andreevsky circle. And Blok, by the way, was one of the favorite poets of Daniil Leonidovich.

Our assumption about Sadovsky's acquaintance with Andreev can support the version that the Chekists "included" both in the same legendary organization. Unfortunately, the life and work of both Daniil Andreev and Boris Sadovsky have not yet been studied enough. In particular, their main acquaintances have not been revealed (in the Soviet period, of course, none of the researchers did this). Perhaps in the future the connections between the two poets will become clearer. In the meantime, here, too, there is a fog of ignorance.

The name of the poet Sadovsky cannot but stop our attention. This is, without exaggeration, a legendary person. And it is quite possible that Sudoplatov endowed the head of the mythical anti-Soviet and pro-German organization, named Glebov by him, with the features of a real and very famous person in his time, leaving, however, himself in the legend among the ordinary members of the Throne. Sadovsky is his real name, and as a poet and prose writer, he acted under the pseudonym Sadovsky.

Boris Alexandrovich Sadovsky really was from the Nizhny Novgorod city of Ardatov, from pillar nobles. And before the war, he lived in a cell of the Novodevichy Convent, a small basement. Only now, by 1941, Sadovsky was only 60 years old, and not more than 70, as Sudoplatov writes about Glebov. Boris Alexandrovich was born on February 10 (22), 1881, and died exactly one year before Stalin's death, on March 5, 1952, all in the same monastery cell. Sadovsky was clearly not suitable for the role of the head of an anti-Soviet organization in the "Evil Empire". The fact is that he, a well-known poet before the revolution, close to A. Blok and A.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fight 3

Bely, who called himself, not without pride, "the last symbolist", had been paralyzed since the beginning of the 1920s. A terrible disease - dryness - then let go of him, then intensified. In the 1930s, he no longer got up from his wheelchair. On this carriage, Sadovsky made walks along the alleys of Novodevichy, but never left the walls of the monastery.

The illness of Boris Aleksandrovich was well known to both the emigration and, of course, the authorities. A rumor about Sadovsky's death even spread abroad, and the poet Vladislav Khodasevich, who knew him closely, honored his colleague with a very sympathetic obituary, published in the Paris Latest News on May 3, 1925 (their correspondence of 1912-1920 was published 63 years later in America). In the obituary of V. Khodasevich, in particular, it was said that "a very important reason for his (Sadovsky's) disagreement with

writers (even in pre-revolutionary Russia. - B.S.) were the political inclinations of Sadovsky. I say on purpose - gravity, not views, because views, that is, convictions based on theory, strictly deliberate historical study, he probably did not have. However, he liked to emphasize his monarchism, his extreme reactionaryness.

Indeed, Boris Alexandrovich did not at all sympathize with the ideas of the revolution - both the February and the October. In 1921, he wrote a small original essay, "The Holy Reaction (Experience of Crystallization of Consciousness)", which is a stream of aphorisms. According to Sadovsky, "the aristocracy crystallizes on the soil of a church-state monarchy. Here and only here is its power and integrity. Outside these principles, it decomposes and quickly perishes". On the contrary, "the democratic system is unconditionally hostile to crystallization. It calls not for common, but for universal happiness, inaccessible to the inhabitants of the Earth. That is why there is always progressive chaos, fermentation and decay in all republics. And under the auspices of the monarchical power, estates form rows of crystals that arose according to the laws of organic development.

Boris Alexandrovich sincerely believed that "Russia has always been a stronghold of holy reaction. That is why progress is so weakly grafted onto it." He believed that "love for the tsar is a purely Russian elemental feeling. You can't explain it, you can't justify it." He saw the main reason for the death of the country as a result of the revolution in the long-standing violation of the organic connection between the Orthodox Church and the autocratic state: "Russia did not die because the church was part of the state; it would also perish if the state became part of the church. It is necessary that church and state, like soul and body, merge into a single crystal.

It is clear that Sadovsky was very wary of progress, if not completely denied it, and considered the reaction as a kind of positive state. Despite his closeness to the Symbolists, he retained an inner attraction to traditional cultural values. His book of poems "Samovars", for example, contained odes to this subject of Russian life - a symbol of the identity of Rus'. Many of Sadovsky's works were devoted to Russian history, including a play about the murder (as Boris Aleksandrovich believed) of Tsarevich Dmitry in Uglich. But there is no information about the Germanophilism of Sadovsky. True, his last historical fiction novel, The Adventures of Karl Weber, published in the USSR in 1928, told about the legendary German giant, who served first in the army of Peter the Great, and then in the army of Frederick the Great, but there are grounds for concluding that Sadovsky had special sympathies for Germany and this novel does not give the Germans.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fight 4

To all appearances, although Sadovsky did not internally reconcile himself to the existence of Soviet power, he naturally did not fight it in any way. In January 1941, he wrote to Korney Chukovsky: "You know what they said to one poet who offered me translations of Mickiewicz: 'Sadovsky is too odious a name: it's impossible.'" I bow to a grateful offspring. Deserved. But I am "the last symbolist", with me all the legends, gossip and secrets known only to me will die ... "Boris Alexandrovich felt like the keeper of the former, pre-revolutionary culture, but he hardly had in his thoughts a violent change in the existing system in the country, all the more With

with the help of German bayonets.

In assessing his personality and fate, both Soviet and foreign literary critics surprisingly agreed. S. Shumikhin in 1990, in an afterword to Sadovsky's one-volume "Swan Clicks" wrote: "He lived his life ... he lived with dignity, wisely and courageously." And the author of the afterword to the publication of the correspondence between Khodasevich and Sadovsky and Andreev stated seven years earlier: "Boris Sadovsky was a man of pure soul, extremely whole, he never adapted to power. and his fate was tragic, although he did not sit in the camps, but reached old age in the Novodevichy Convent.

A person of "pure soul" could not even think of collaborating with the inhuman, anti-Christian regime of the Nazis even for the sake of overthrowing the Bolsheviks, if he thought like this:

"The Antichrist begins his campaign against the Church under various guises of false rebirth. Brings out Luther and affirms the Protestant heresy. At his own instigation, Cervantes ridiculed the pious crusading chivalry. The first sprouts of rationalism were launched by Shakespeare, imperceptibly replacing God with fate. In philosophy, attempts are born to embrace the immensity. And artists blaspheme the Madonna... Progress cloaks in quest, promises novelty. And the personality, leaving itself, crumbles into a cloud of dust. It doesn't occur to her that everything has already been found, that the Kingdom of God is in her heart."

The leader of the Third Reich had to appear to Sadovsky as a new Antichrist, who had risen from the German "Protestant heresy", replacing God with providence and turning into ashes "a chimera called conscience."

Yes, and Sadovsky did not particularly strive to escape from the Soviet country. In 1921, when he managed to get up after a four-year paralysis, he began to fuss about going abroad - for treatment. In 1922, these efforts ended in failure, and Sadovsky made no more attempts to emigrate. And the mystery why the Chekists did not touch such an odious figure either in 1937 or during the post-war arrests may have an unexpected, but very simple explanation. Sadovsky liked ... Stalin. Boris Alexandrovich himself told more than once how one day, walking along the alleys of the Novodevichy cemetery, he met Joseph Vissarionovich, who came to the grave of his wife Nadezhda Alliluyeva, who committed suicide in November 1932. Upon learning that the poet Sadovsky was in front of him, Stalin remembered that he had once read his poem in the collection "Reader-Reciter" and highly appreciated it. The omnipotent dictator, who in his youth wrote poetry himself - even before the revolution, one even got into the popular anthology "Collection of the best examples of Georgian literature" - asked if Sadovsky needed anything, but Boris Alexandrovich answered with dignity: "Thank you, I have All I need". Nevertheless, Stalin ordered to hold in his

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services9b5

cell-basement of the radio, so that the paralyzed poet could follow the events taking place in the world.

Of course, Sadovsky could have simply

invent, because in general he was prone to hoaxes. Not without success, he forged Blok's poems and published imaginary letters from Yesenin, Nekrasov, and even the murderer of General Mezentssev, Stepanyak-Kravchinsky. This was one of the few sources of his income: after 1928, Sadovsky's original texts hardly appeared in print. The fakes turned out to be so successful that even decades after the death of Boris Alexandrovich, they were published as genuine texts of those whom he imitated. Only now, Stalin's daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva claimed that her father never went to her mother's grave (it is impossible to verify this statement). However, it has been reliably established that in 1935 a radio station was equipped in the basement of Sadovsky - quite possibly, by order of Stalin. If the meeting of the almighty leader and the disgraced poet actually happened, then this explains a lot in the fate of Sadovsky. Now he could not be arrested without the sanction of Stalin himself. Iosif Vissarionovich spoke with the same saving grace (albeit only by telephone) with Mikhail Bulgakov and Boris Pasternak, thereby issuing them a kind of safe-conduct (he definitely loved Bulgakov's "Days of the Turbins", but how he treated Pasternak's work is unknown). It turns out that the Chekists would hardly have directly risked actually involving Boris Aleksandrovich in a pro-German monarchist organization they imagined. Even according to the legend, the paralyzed Sadovsky could not "lead" it in any way (the Germans would never have believed this). Undoubtedly, the poet did not even suspect that he was enlisted by the Chekists in the sub-police. He was suitable for the role of one of the rank and file members of the Throne, especially since he never left the Novodevichy Convent, where German agents certainly would not have penetrated, and Heine-Demyanov could fantasize about him as much as he wanted.

It is possible that Sudoplatov endowed the head of Throne with the features of Sadovsky's biography in order to divert the attention of researchers and readers from the real figure of the person whom V. V. Korovin knows under the pseudonym Sedov. And the pseudonym itself clearly does not fit Boris Alexandrovich, who was completely bald at that time, although it has some consonance with his last name.

Both Daniil Andreev and Boris Sadovsky were used "in the dark" by the NKVD in their game with German intelligence. If Andreev, with his work and convictions, gave at least some reason to "appoint" him in absentia as the leader of a pro-German monarchist organization, then Sadovsky, it seems, attracted the Chekists only with his rich pedigree. If the first, as we have already seen, comparing Hitler with Stalin (in relation to their personal courage), had a low opinion of Joseph Vissarionovich, then the second, awarded the sign of the attention of the dictator himself, I think, did not have much hatred for Joseph Vissarionovich, and he was not serious about politics either. was not interested.

Most likely, Sadovsky did not participate in any circles at all, while Andreev could, at least with friends, conduct "anti-Soviet" conversations. By the way, his argument about Stalin's cowardice and Hitler's courage is hardly thorough. Still, Stalin had a cruel experience of the death of Kirov, after which he fenced himself off from the outside world with a dense wall of protection. Hitler, however, experienced a similar shock much later, only on July 20, 1944, and after the assassination of Stauffenberg, just as

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services96

severely strengthened security and limited contacts with the outside world (for example, they began to search all the officers arriving at Hitler's headquarters). The assassination attempt on Hitler, as we know, almost failed. Fate turned away from Klaus Stauffenberg: a chain of accidents led to the failure of the plot. If one of the officers did not leave the briefcase with the bomb away from Hitler, the Fuhrer would hardly have survived. But with Stalin, nothing like this could happen in principle, no matter how unfavorable accidents intervened in the course of events: the system of his protection was too reliable.

Named by Ovchinnikova among the members of the Throne, a certain well-known art professor is, perhaps, an art critic Vladimir Alexandrovich Alexandrov, who was involved in the same case with Daniil Andreev and was released earlier than others. And the sculptor Sidorov mentioned by Sudoplatov could very well be the second Witberg (Zhenya Morgenstern in "Wanderers of the Night"), who owned the project for the new Cathedral of Christ the Savior (Temple of the Body, Soul and Spirit) on Sparrow Hills (in Andreev's novel - the Temple of the Sun of the World, as his preferred to be named by the author himself). It is also possible that Daniil Andreev also knew Heine-Demianov, only not necessarily under his real name. A book written by Daniil Leonidovich in collaboration with the geographer S. N. Matveev - "Remarkable explorers of mountainous Central Asia", with a dedication dated December 16, 1946 to a certain Alexander Petrovich Brudes (?) has been preserved. Who knows if Alexander Petrovich Demyanov, well-known to us, was hiding under this hardly and supposedly readable surname?

The vast majority of the members of the Andreevsky circle (except, of course, the seksots) did not even suspect that they were "members" of a powerful conspiratorial organization, and they never went beyond anti-Soviet conversations. Heine, no doubt, did not bring to their attention the German assignments to establish an extensive underground network throughout the country. It seems that it was far from accidental that Daniil Andreev was mobilized into the Red Army precisely in the second half of 1942, when Operation Monastery entered its active phase and Abwehr couriers appeared in Moscow. Obviously, the Chekists were afraid that the Germans might send their agent through channels unknown to the NKVD directly to the "head" of a non-existent organization, who was unaware of the role assigned to him, and reveal the deception. Daniil Leonidovich returned from the army to Moscow only in the autumn of 1944, when Heine-Demyanov had long been in Belarus, where the operation "Monastery" was transferred, but under a different name - "Berezino".

Probably, after the war, the leadership of the state security still harbored the hope that the successors of the Abwehr would again get in touch with Heine and then the Throne organization would still come in handy. It is also possible that Demyanov continued to maintain acquaintance with Andreev (if it was he who was presented with the book at the end of 1946). However, control over the remaining German agents in the USSR ended up in the hands of Gehlen, who rightly considered Heine a double agent and informed American intelligence about this, with which he worked closely in the early post-war years. Obviously, Demyanov's unsuccessful mission to Paris led Sudoplatov and other Soviet intelligence leaders to the conclusion that Throne would no longer be of any use. And then a sanction was given for the arrest of Daniil Andreev and members of his circle. This happened in April 1947. The recently published materials of Andreev's investigative case prove that he was accused of

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. secret fight

special services

pro-German sympathies. By the decision of the Special Meeting, Andreev and some other of his acquaintances received 25 years each - the highest penalty at that time, since the death penalty was abolished for a short time. Daniil Andreev had to serve his term not in the camp, but in the Vladimir prison, where the most dangerous state criminals were kept. Ironically, General Sudoplatov, who was unfairly convicted in a falsified case about the Beria conspiracy, also ended up here later.

Unfortunately, documents and materials about German spies during the Great Patriotic War have so far been published so contradictory that they give rise to mutually exclusive versions. I deliberately do not try to smooth out these contradictions. Here, reader, nothing can be done. Witnesses to the events of more than half a century ago, almost all have already died. Some of the documents have been destroyed, some are stored in the archives of special services that are inaccessible to mere mortals and are in no hurry to share them with the general public. It is suggestive, for example, of the fact that not a single publication, both in our country and in the West, is a publication of documents in the strict sense of the word. Reports and protocols of interrogations are given, as a rule, without references to the archives where they are stored. Only in Cookridge's book are there exact indications of archival storage units. However, here all the quotations are translated into English, and it is difficult for us to judge in what way the meaning of the original could be distorted during the translation. In addition, Western writers, like the Soviets, could well add details or even give a false picture of events, especially if it was dictated by the interests of the secret services, with which many of them, like Cookridge, had been associated for a long time.

Therefore, dear reader, I am forced to give you not a strictly verified and clear picture of German espionage in the USSR during the war years, but I cite, although processed, passed through the sieve of historical criticism, but still only material from which you yourself are free to select what will seem more plausible and trustworthy to you, and to discard facts that, in your opinion, are fantastic and have nothing to do with the truth. Just remember at the same time that the truth sometimes turns out to be more fantastic than any of the most daring fiction.

In general, there is a strong impression that in their memoirs the Chekists greatly exaggerate the scale of their success in disinforming the enemy with the help of radio games and double agents, as well as the number of such spies. Undoubtedly, the Abwehr and other German intelligence services, at least several times during the war, managed to obtain reliable information from their sources in the highest Soviet headquarters. But who exactly these agents were - we can only guess today. Well, not a single intelligence service in the world likes to reveal the biographies of "its people." So far, we have very fragmentary and contradictory information only about the life path of "agent 438" (aka Vladimir Minishkiy or Mishinsky). About the unknown informant from the headquarters of the Rokossovsky radio operator Alexander, like about many others, nothing definite can be said at all, except that a number of messages attributed to him turned out to be quite reliable.

Often, in support of the thesis that almost all the agents who worked for the Abwehr in Moscow were in fact double agents recruited by the NKVD, the following argument is put forward. Agents of this level could not

and related radio operators to work in the highest Soviet headquarters and

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services⁸

institutions for many months and even years: they would be exposed very quickly. After all, they are usually disclosed within a few weeks, less often - months, as soon as an information leak is detected or an actively working radio transmitter is located. One can object to this: the NKVD, at least in the first years of the war, did not have good direction finders. In addition, some radio operators, like the aforementioned Alexander, could work on full-time army radio stations and thus generally be out of sight of counterintelligence radio direction finding units. We also do not know how long certain agents worked and whether the information contained in a particular report belongs to one or more persons. Minishky-Mishinsky, for example, according to Cookridge, worked in the State Defense Committee for only three months, and in such a short period of time he could well have remained undiscovered.

Just as little as about real German agents in the USSR, we know about 06 imaginary agents, double agents who led the German command by the nose. Perhaps the only happy exception here is A.P. Demyanov, whose fate we have told our readers in such detail. Meanwhile, even in German sources there are descriptions of operations that almost certainly took place with the active participation of Soviet counterintelligence. I will tell only about one of them, which began at the same time and in the same place as the operation of Soviet military counterintelligence officers to eliminate the German intelligence group under the conditional name "Neman" recreated in the novel by Vladimir Bogomolov and, most likely, born of the writer's fantasy. .

So, the time of action is August 1944. Location - Belarus. The characters are agents of German intelligence under the nicknames Igor and Gregor. Their history and "combat exploits" in the field of serving the Wehrmacht are described in some detail by Cookridge and Whiting.

Igor is Vasily Antonovich Skryabin, who was born on May 13, 1920 in Nizhny Novgorod. His parents, according to Cookridge, were called Pyotr Davydovich and Maria Iosifovna. Here, an unsolvable mystery immediately arises: why did the future German agent wear a middle name that was different from his father's name? Cookridge generally categorically asserts that this Scriabin was no more, no less, like a native nephew of the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, whose real name was Scriabin. He does not explain how the agent's father, Petr Davydovich Scriabin, became the brother of Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Scriabin. Whiting does not dare to make such a sensational message. Most likely, agent Igor was the namesake of a powerful member of the Politburo, and even then only if Scriabin was his real name. Cookridge and Whiting agree on one thing: Vasily Antonovich's parents were repressed "for counter-revolutionary activities", which is why he strongly disliked the Soviet government. He studied at Moscow University, according to another version - at the Polytechnic Institute (where it was very difficult for the son of repressed parents to get there then). From the university (institute), he was called up as a lieutenant in the 38th Guards Regiment, and at the first opportunity on August 17, 1941, Vasily Antonovich surrendered to the enemy. Note that by that time the Soviet guards divisions had not yet

existed. The only exception was parts of rocket mortars, the glorious Katyushas, which, even during formation, were assigned the status of guards. Perhaps Scriabin served in one of the Katyusha regiments. He received special training as an agent of the Abwehr and, according to

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

Cookridge and Whiting, successfully carried out reconnaissance missions behind the front lines several times.

Under the agent nickname Gregor, the German Albert Muller was hiding, who was born on November 11, 1909 in St. Petersburg. His father, Leo Müller, represented the interests of a large German textile company in Russia. The mother, according to Cookridge, was Russian, Evgenia Pavlovna Stolyar, who later took her husband's surname. Note that the maiden name of the agent's mother strongly resembles a Jewish one, and it is possible that, like the head of the residency "Max", Gregor had a bit of Jewish blood in his veins, which did not prevent him from cooperating with German intelligence.

Albert studied in Leningrad as an electrical engineer, and when, in 1928, after the death of his father, he and his mother emigrated to Germany, he continued his education at the University of Leipzig. A few years before the start of the war, thanks to his fluency in Russian, he became an employee of the Abwehr.

On August 9, Igor and Gregor - this "sweet couple" - launched the Drozd operation prepared on the orders of Gelen. First, agents in the role of officers of the General Staff of the Red Army were supposed to reconnoiter the deployment of Soviet troops in the Vitebsk region, and then, under the guise of demobilized from the army, penetrate Moscow and go to work at a military plant, Gosplan or some kind of people's commissariat in order to collect information about the military production and transfer to the front of troops and military equipment. It is very strange, however, why Gehlen paid such close attention to Vitebsk, which by the time the Drozd operation began was already deep in the rear of the advancing Soviet armies. One way or another, the "thrushes" were safely parachuted into the Soviet rear at night and in the morning appeared at the headquarters of the 11th Guards Division of General Kozlov in the city of Ostrov. The island, it must be said, is not at all in the Vitebsk, but in the Baranovichi region, not far from the then front line, so Cookridge does not seem to deviate from the truth here. Freshly minted General Staff officers Major Posukhin or Posyuchin (Gregor) and Senior Lieutenant Krasin (Igor) met at the division headquarters, as Gregor later wrote in the Report, such a warm welcome, with plentiful drinking, that the scenes of Gogol's immortal comedy "The Inspector General" were immediately recalled. From Kozlov, the agents went to Vitebsk in a car with a driver kindly provided by the general. From Vitebsk, they transmitted the collected information by radio and, having changed their documents, moved to Moscow. Now they have become officers seconded from the army to work in the national economy as having valuable technical specialties. Igor got a job at the State Planning Commission, and Gregor - at an electrical plant. They settled on the outskirts of Moscow, in a wooden hut with a corridor system, in one room. One fine day, or rather, the evening, the agents decided to go on the air again, but found that the batteries of the radio had run out, and it had to be connected to the general electrical network at home. Suddenly, Gregor noticed that the light in the room was blinking, repeating the signals transmitted over the radio. Here to their room

a neighbor came in, a young, pretty girl in her early twenties. From the manipulations of Igor and Gregor with the transmitter, she had power outages in the electric stove on which she cooked her dinner, and Martha decided to ask her neighbors - engineers after all - to REPAIR the stove. Igor hastily forgot to hide the headphones, and Marfa immediately realized that she was facing German spies. Gregor painfully pondered whether it was now necessary to kill Marfa in execution of the operation and where to hide the body. However

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁰

friends worried in vain: Martha, fortunately for them, turned out to be a staunch anti-communist and, moreover, fell head over heels in love with the young and handsome Igor. The smart girl was not only able to get food for the radio, which was in short supply in military Moscow, but also began to carry out other secret assignments, and Gregor received permission from Gehlen to recruit her.

Igor In Gosplan, I managed to get acquainted with some high-ranking official from the People's Commissariat of Railways, a big lover of booze and money, who showed a tendency to corruption. Igor decided, as they say, to take the bull by the horns and, after another drinking bout, directly offered his drinking companion to sell the schedule of railway transportation for November and December 1944 (it was in October), for which the official quite soberly requested a substantial amount - 40 thousand rubles. Friends did not have such money, and I had to ask Gehlen by radio to urgently send a courier with money. The courier named Peter was dropped from a parachute in the vicinity of Moscow and landed safely. After handing over the required amount to Gregor and Igor, Peter, a Russian defector, moved, according to Whiting, as far as the Vologda region in order to establish contact there with a large group of German soldiers who had fled from Soviet camps or who had somehow escaped capture and even managed to establish radio contact. with the headquarters of Gehlen.

It is difficult to say what exactly fed the unbridled fantasy of the American journalist. But his story about Peter's trip to Vologda is bewildering. The German encirclement could not climb so far to the north, and there were no German partisan detachments from escaped prisoners of war either there or in any other region of the USSR. Either there was some kind of radio game from the Soviet side (although it is unlikely that the Chekists would have chosen such a remote Vologda region as the location of the "German partisans"), or someone simply invented this story.

But back to Igor and Gregor and their friend Martha, who, it seems, was called that - her name without quotes. The corrupt official received the money and handed over the required documents to the agents for one night. While Igor was photographing them, Gregor, just in case, in violation of the secrecy instructions, wrote out the most important information from the transportation schedule.

Now the tired but satisfied spies could only wait for the plane that Gehlen was supposed to send for them. The description of this final and most dramatic episode of their difficult mission, I want to quote from Whiting's book in full. But first - for comparison - let me remind you of another description: how counterintelligence officers finally met with the German intelligence group "Neman" in the novel by Vladimir Bogomolov:

"Silver voices were approaching. Neither Tamantsev nor Blinov, hidden in the bushes, could see anyone, but Alekhin, ninety meters away from them, hiding behind the trees, was already examining three in military uniforms who had come out of the forest on the other side of the clearing, and

I carefully counted their steps.

After waiting as long as necessary, he appeared on the road with the assistant commandant; seeing them, the three who were walking towards them fell silent; five people approached, looking at each other with interest.

They met, as Alekhin calculated quite accurately, by a rotten stump, directly opposite the bushes behind which Blinov and Tamantsev hid, greeted each other, and the assistant commandant, holding his hand

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@1.

visor, suggested:

- Comrade officers, I ask you to show the documents! Commandant Patrol.

"Your mandate for the right to check," asked one of the three, shaven-headed, with captain's shoulder straps, so calmly, as if he knew in advance that here, in the forest, his documents were to be checked and that this was an unpleasant and empty, but inevitable formality. - Who are you?

To his left, closer to the ambush, stood a tall, well-built senior lieutenant, about thirty or a little older, and to his right a young lieutenant, also stout and broad in the shoulders. All three were wearing the usual summer officer uniforms (the lieutenant had newer ones), caps and field infantry shoulder straps without emblems. On the captain's tunic, a block with sashes was visible above the left pocket, and yellow and red stripes for wounds above the right.

Of course, here we are dealing with a work of art, so to speak, with the fruit of the writer's imagination. But you must admit, reader, that the image in this scene, in contrast to Whiting's opus, inspires our confidence in the psychological and everyday accuracy of the details. How it all ended in Bogomolov's novel - readers remember well. After a short fight, the German agents were neutralized, and their leader, a shaven-headed captain (a hardened enemy of the Soviet government and an experienced intelligence officer, the elusive Mishchenko) was killed. At the same time, a young lieutenant-radio operator, split in a temper, in confusion, gave out to the counterintelligence officers a valuable German informant named Matilda, who worked as a cryptographer at the headquarters of the front - though not at K.K. I. Kh. Bagramyan. I wonder: did Bogomolov rely here on the archives of the Soviet special services, or did he simply come up with Matilda?

Now let's see how the adventures of Gregor and Igor ended, like Bogomolov's scouts who were ambushed. So, a word to Charles Whiting:

"Gregor, Igor and Marfa were overjoyed when they learned that they were going to be evacuated across the front line. They immediately started

to look for a suitable place near Moscow, where the light aircraft of the Luftwaffe, which Gehlen promised to send, could land. Eventually they found a suitable landing point near the city of Dzerzhinsk, 60 or 70 miles west of Moscow.

The night the attempt was made to rescue the agents was damp and cold, and all three, terribly cold on the wet grass, constantly checked their watches and listened for the wind to carry the sounds of the long-awaited car approaching. When it was time to light signal fires to show the pilot of the rescue plane where to land, Gregor and Igor set to work and soon lit what they thought was a giant fire.

The fire rose higher and higher, and it seemed that the entire surrounding area was bathed in a bright blood-red light. Gregor and Igor looked at each other in horror: the fire must have been visible for miles around. Minutes flowed and flowed, but the plane still did not appear. Gregor licked his dry, chapped lips (Whiting's hero always does this when he's especially excited. - B.S.) while the flames billowed upwards. The tension became unbearable. What if that damn plane never arrives? Half an hour passed. Gradually, the frightened agents began to think that everything was in vain. The plane will not arrive, they will be provided by their

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services?

fate: it seems that no attempt to save them will be made either this night or any other.

At this time, Igor suddenly uttered a restrained but joyful cry. Before they even recognized it, the plane had touched down, and a faint figure had jumped out of it, shouting something at them over the noise of a pair of engines.

Gregor was the first to react. At the moment when he began his run to the plane, there was a frantic command: "Stop!" Following this, the bullets pattered on the grass around them like rain on a tin roof. They've been discovered! Tracer bullets cut through the air. Lines like myriads of red, angry bees drew jagged lines in the night.

Gregor ran like he had never run before in his life. The pilot noticed the danger and began to start the engines. Gregor saw the plane's tail begin to rise and redoubled his efforts. He was out of breath, his lungs threatened to burst at any moment. But he made this last effort! Strong, rough hands grabbed him under the armpits and dragged him into the plane. As soon as he hit the metal floor of the plane heavily, more dead than alive, the car began to rise.

In fear that he would not catch up with the plane, Gregor did not notice that he was wounded in the arm. The pilots tore his linen into bandages and bandaged the bleeding wound. The best they could offer him was a small dose of morphine. But Gregor did not feel pain: his thoughts were next to poor Igor and Martha, who remained on earth.

"God," he sighed heavily, clutching his head with his good hand, "what will happen to them?" And after that, he fell into despair. Microfilm! He gave it to Igor to hide. Igor has vital information!

A few hours later, Gregor, dressed in the uniform of a captain in the German army, reported to Gehlen's deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Otto Schaefer. In a grim mood, he admitted that Igor still had vital information. And then he suddenly realized that his own notes were with him. Gregor immediately asked for his civilian clothes, ripped open the seams of his jacket with a razor and took out his pencil notes. With a triumphant gesture, he handed them over to his superior, who hurried off with them.

A few minutes later, these notes were already on the table at General Gehlen himself, and the master of espionage put them in order, trying to comprehend their meaning. At this time, Captain Muller, who felt like he had been raised from the dead, tossed and turned in bed, completely exhausted and not even able to sleep, reliving again and again what happened in a lonely forest near Moscow just a few hours ago.

And Cookridge paints the episode with Gregor's evacuation differently, in the spirit of a romantic love story. According to him, no one attacked the arriving plane. But Igor, who intended to take Marfa with him and received permission from Gehlen to do so, was late with her at the landing site and appeared in the clearing at the moment when the car had already taken off into the air and Gregor, who was on board, was desperately waving his hand to his comrade.

Whiting and Cookridge agree with each other that Igor got in touch again a few weeks later and was ordered to make his way to East Prussia with Martha, but he never arrived there. Whiting claims that Gehlen's employees remain stubbornly silent when asked about the fate of Igor and Martha, perhaps because they are at the beginning

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services
@ 3Z

1970s still worked in Moscow for West German and American intelligence.

It seems to me that Whiting's account is the most plausible. Probably, everything was like that: the shelling of the plane by Soviet soldiers, poor Muller, running towards him with the last of his strength, Igor and Martha, who, due to the shelling that had begun, did not have time to board the plane.

But we admit, reader: the whole story of the two German agents from the very beginning developed too smoothly. Here is the fool-general, readily acquainting them with all the secret plans; here is the good girl Martha, who only dreams of how to help Germany in her fight against Bolshevism, and even somehow able to get extremely scarce batteries for a radio transmitter; here and very opportunely turned up a corrupt Soviet official-drunkard, ready at a reasonable price to sell the much-needed German intelligence schedule for the upcoming rail transportation. And what an incredible coincidence is worth when a plane sent for agents lands in a clearing near Dzerzhinsk near Moscow at the same time and Soviet submachine gunners rush in! By the way, it is not clear what kind of Dzerzhinsk is? There is no city with this name in the Moscow region. There is Dzerzhinsk in the Gorky region, but it is east, not west of Moscow, and the distance

from it to the capital more than 300 kilometers, and by no means 120 (70 miles). There is Dzerzhinsk in the Minsk region. It is indeed to the west of Moscow, but very far away. Most likely, we are talking about the village of Dzerzhinsky in the Moscow region on the Moscow River.

I think that all the miracles that happened to Igor and Gregor are easy to explain if one, in my opinion, is the only correct version. In reality, Igor Skryabin and Marfa were Soviet agents, and the entire operation "Drozd" actually took place under the control of the NKVD. The main goal of the Soviet side was to supply the Germans with disinformation. Literally everything was carefully calculated here. It is possible that Igor, in one way or another, prompted Gregor to make extracts from the flimsy plan of rail transportation that was planted to him. Then he made sure that the microfilm with this document remained with him. Then the Chekists set up an ambush at the landing site of the plane in such a way that the slightly wounded Gregor could get into it, and Igor and Martha, quite naturally, could not do this. Apparently, Soviet intelligence was afraid to transmit the full text of the document to the enemy: a fake could be revealed. Here the fragmentary notes of Gregor-Muller were much more reliable. Any nonsense in them could be attributed to the haste in which they were made. It also becomes clear why Scriabin and Martha did not dare to return to the Germans. Scriabin was not sure that German intelligence would not suspect him of a double game when they carefully read Muller's report on the progress and results of Operation Drozd. It is quite possible that Gehlen eventually came to the conclusion that Igor had been betrayed, and therefore his employees kept silent instead of answering the question about the post-war fate of Scriabin and Martha. I think the former agents really continued to live in Moscow, but they worked, now quite openly, for the KGB. As for Gregor-Muller, he was much more fortunate than the invented Mishchenko from the novel "In August 1944": he returned to his own, but only because it was in the hands of Soviet counterintelligence officers ...

OBER LIEUTENANT PAUL SIEBERT AND THE FAILURE

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services@4
HUNT FOR
THE BIG THREE IN TEHRAN

It is widely believed that the German secret services planned to organize an assassination attempt on Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill during their meeting in Tehran, and only thanks to the vigilance of Soviet counterintelligence officers these sinister plans were not realized. In the USSR, the first message about the failed attempt on the "Big Three" appeared on December 19, 1943. On this day, the Pravda newspaper published a correspondence from London marked the 17th:

"According to the Washington correspondent of the Reuters agency, President Roosevelt said at a press conference that he was staying at the Russian embassy in Tehran, and not at the American one, because Stalin became aware of the German conspiracy. Marshal Stalin, Roosevelt added, said that there might be a conspiracy on the lives of all participants in the conference. He asked President Roosevelt to stay at the Soviet embassy in order to avoid having to travel around the city. Churchill was in the British embassy adjoining the Soviet embassy. The President said that around Tehran is,

perhaps a hundred German spies. It would be a pretty good deal for the Germans, Roosevelt added, if they could deal with Marshal Stalin, Churchill, and me as we drove through the streets of Tehran. The Soviet and American embassies are separated from each other by a distance of about one and a half kilometers ... "

After the war, the documents of the Tehran Conference were published. Already in a message to Stalin dated November 24, 1943, Roosevelt expressed concern about ensuring the safety of the participants in the meeting in Tehran: "I know that your Embassy and the British Embassy in Tehran are located close to each other, while my Mission is at some distance from them . I was told (obviously from Soviet sources. - B.S.) that all three of us would be taking unnecessary risks going to meetings if we stopped too far apart. Where do you think we should live?

The recording of the conversation between People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov and the US Ambassador to Moscow Averell Harriman, held at the Soviet embassy in Tehran on the night of November 27-28, 1943, indicates that "Uncle Joe" - Stalin had a very definite opinion where is the best place for an American president to stay. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, knowing about Roosevelt's concern about security, frightened the Americans even more: "Unfavorable information was received at the last moment. The point is that pro-German elements in Tehran are preparing hostile acts against the leaders of our states. These acts may cause serious incidents that we would like to avoid. Therefore, from the point of view of better organization of the meeting and in order to avoid traveling through the streets, it would be safer if President Roosevelt stayed in the building of the Soviet embassy.

Harriman seemed to be frightened, but to save face, he pretended that the president himself was going to do just that, and without any Molotov intimidation there: "From the very beginning, Roosevelt planned to stay at the Soviet embassy in order to avoid moving. But lately he, Roosevelt, had been informed that it was perfectly safe to move around the streets, and therefore, and in order not to create an uncomfortable position for Churchill, he decided to stay at the American embassy. I do not doubt the seriousness of the matter, but in view of

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@5

about the security of the leaders of the three states, I would like to receive more detailed information."

And Molotov willingly provided such information: "We are talking about persons associated with the German agent in Iran Mayer (a resident of German intelligence, whose real name is Richard August; back in August 1943 he was arrested by British counterintelligence. - B.S.). Regarding the Mayer group, the Iranian government took action and expelled some individuals from Iran. However, Mayer's agents still remain in Tehran, and they can be expected to act in ways that could cause unwanted incidents. Therefore, it seems appropriate to implement the original proposal that President Roosevelt stay in the Soviet Union.

embassy."

Harriman confirmed with relief that he had no doubt that the President

Tehran will take advantage of Soviet hospitality. But he asked to clarify whether he meant the possibility of an assassination attempt or whether he was talking about demonstrations that pro-German elements could arrange in the Persian capital.

Molotov answered evasively, because it was not worth it to intimidate the Americans either: what if Roosevelt refuses to go to Tehran: "These elements can take hostile acts against any of the leaders of our states and provoke an incident that will cause retaliatory measures. In this case, innocent people may suffer. This should be avoided, as it is beneficial only to the Germans and highly undesirable to the Allies. If anything happens, it will be incomprehensible why the original proposal was not implemented."

Harriman promised to immediately convey the information received to the president and expressed confidence that since Marshal Stalin considered it best for the president to stay at the Soviet embassy, then Roosevelt would do so.

Indeed, on the afternoon of November 28, President Roosevelt left the American legation and urgently moved to the Soviet embassy. He was emphatically generously given the main building. Stalin, with his close associates, modestly settled in the outbuildings.

Churchill was also concerned about the possible intrigues of German agents in Tehran and approved of Roosevelt's decision. The British Prime Minister wrote in his memoirs:

"I was not happy with the way the meeting was organized upon my arrival by plane in Tehran. The English envoy met me in his car, and we set off from the airfield to our diplomatic mission. As we traveled into the city for nearly 3 miles, Persian mounted patrols were posted every 50 yards. Thus, every intruder could know which important person was coming and which way she would follow. There was no protection in case there were two or three determined men armed with pistols or a bomb.

The American security service more intelligently ensured the protection of the president (the Americans had the sad experience of successful attempts by their compatriots on their own presidents, which did not prevent lone assassin Lee Harvey Oswald from killing John Fitzgerald Kennedy in Dallas 20 years later. - B.S.). The presidential car proceeded, accompanied by a reinforced escort of armored vehicles. At the same time, the president's plane landed at an unknown location, and the president went unguarded to the American mission through streets and alleys where no one was waiting for him.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services6@6

The building of the English legation and the gardens surrounding it almost adjoin the Soviet embassy, and since the Anglo-Indian brigade, which was entrusted with protecting us, was in direct contact with the even more numerous Russian troops surrounding their property, they soon united, and we, thus, found ourselves in an isolated area in which all wartime precautions were observed. American mission, which was guarded by American troops,

was more than half a mile away, which meant that during the entire conference either the President or Stalin and I would have to travel back and forth twice or thrice a day through the narrow streets of Tehran. In addition, Molotov, who arrived in Tehran 24 hours before our arrival, spoke out about the fact that one of us must constantly travel back and forth, caused us deep concern. "If anything like that happens," he said, "it could create the most unfavorable impression." This could not be denied. I strongly supported Molotov's request to the president to move into the building of the Soviet embassy, which was three or four times larger than the rest, and occupied a large area, now surrounded by Soviet troops and police. We persuaded Roosevelt to accept this sensible advice, and the next day he and all his staff, including the excellent Filipino cooks from his yacht, moved into the building of the Russian embassy, where he was given a large and comfortable room. Thus, we all found ourselves inside the same circle and could calmly, without interference, discuss the problems of the world war.

The British and Americans, it seems to me, were too gullible, believing that Stalin invited Roosevelt to the Soviet embassy solely out of concern for the president's safety. I don't think everything is that simple. And it is by no means accidental that the Soviet side conceded the main building of the embassy to the American delegation with a grand gesture. It must have been stuffed with "bugs", which made it easier to listen to Roosevelt's confidential conversations with his retinue. Yes, and psychologically, the stay of the American president in the Soviet embassy was in the hands of Stalin: it made him more pliable to the arguments of the Soviet leader. Not to mention the fact that the atmosphere of fear fomented by "Uncle Joe" in Tehran was supposed to induce Western partners to value their alliance with him more and make Roosevelt and Churchill more accommodating.

The version about such an underlying reason for providing apartments to Roosevelt in Tehran is indirectly confirmed by the son of Lavrenty Beria Sergo, who studied at the radio department of the Military Electrotechnical Academy in Leningrad. Here is what he says:

"I had been studying at the academy for a year when the order came to second me to Moscow. With what it is connected, I did not guess. Leaving Leningrad, I only knew that I was heading to the disposal of the General Staff: the order came from there.

The conversation that took place in Moscow did not bring much clarity either: "You are going on a special assignment. The equipment you receive should be installed in one place."

The equipment was eavesdropping. There was no talk of any conference. I did not know that we were flying to Tehran. I even found out that they sat down in Baku
only on the airfield.

He flew to Tehran with the same group of officers. We parted at the airport, and I still do not know who flew to Iran and for what purpose. We didn't see each other again.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@U

We were met by several military men and people in civilian clothes. one me

recognized immediately. It was a specialist from the special laboratory of the NKVD, a radio operator. From him it became known that I would have to deal with the decoding of tape recordings.

On the way from the airfield, no one talked about the matter, and it was not customary to ask. We drove up to a building and went inside.

I did not imagine that I could meet my father here in Iran. The specialists only had time to say that the equipment was already connected when an unfamiliar officer entered:

- You're being called.

After going through several rooms, I got to my father. We haven't seen each other for a long time.

- You see, - says the father, - where did you meet? Tehran... Have you already been warned what you are going to do? Iosif Vissarionovich personally demanded that you and someone else be connected to this work on his instructions. By the way, how is your English? Did you forget the language? No? This is good. Now we are going to check you.

One of the translators was invited. We exchanged greetings and joked.

"No, no," says the father. - Talk normally. Father listened to us said:

- Okay, I didn't forget.

When the interpreter left, the father spoke about the case:

"Just keep in mind: this is a rather heavy and monotonous job.

From the point of view of technology, I had no questions, but who and for what purpose we are going to listen, it was curious. But we didn't even have time to talk properly, when I was called to Iosif Vissarionovich ...

Stalin asked how the studies at the academy were going, and immediately got down to business:

- I have specially selected you and a number of other people who do not officially meet with foreigners anywhere, because what I entrust to you is an unethical business ...

After some thought, he added:

- But I have to... In fact, the main question is now being decided: will they help us or not. I have to know everything, every nuance... I chose you and the others for this very purpose. I chose people I know and trust. I know that you are dedicated. And here is the task before you personally...

Stalin called us one by one. I do not know which of them was an army officer, like me, who served in intelligence or the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. The rule of never asking each other about anything was strictly observed ...

Probably, Iosif Vissarionovich set the same task for

my new comrades. And here's what it was about. All conversations between Roosevelt and Churchill were to be tapped, transcribed and reported daily to Stalin personally. Where exactly are the microphones, Iosif Vissarionovich did not tell me. Later I learned that conversations were being tapped in six or seven rooms of the Soviet embassy, where President Roosevelt was staying. All conversations with Churchill took place there. They usually spoke to each other before the beginning of the meetings or after them. Some conversations, of course, went on between members of the delegations and during rest hours.

As for technology - ordinary recording, only tape recorders at that

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services6@8

time was, of course, more. All conversations are recorded and processed. But of course, Stalin never read and was not going to read all this heap of papers. Consider, after all, that Roosevelt, say, had a colossal retinue. Can you imagine how many hours of recording it would be? Of course, we were primarily interested in Roosevelt. It was necessary to determine both him and Churchill by the timbre of his voice and address. And the microphones ... were in different rooms.

Some questions... were also discussed by representatives of the military headquarters. In a word, it was ... not so easy to choose from this polyphony exactly what Stalin needed. Dialogues between Roosevelt and Churchill, the chiefs of staff, were processed first. In the mornings, before the meetings began, I went to see Stalin.

The main text that I reported to him was small in volume, only a few pages. That was exactly what interested him. The materials themselves were translated into Russian, but Stalin made us always have the English text at hand.

For an hour and a half every day he worked only with us. It was a kind of preparation for the next meeting with Roosevelt and Churchill ... I remember how he read the Russian text and kept asking: "Did you say with conviction or doubt? What do you think? And here? How do you feel? Will he make concessions? Will he insist on this?"

Without the English text, without your own notes, of course, you cannot answer all these questions with all your desire. Therefore, they worked seriously. The same voice timbre and intonation were taken into account.

Of course, such participation in the work of the conference was tacit. Apparently, few other than Stalin knew about what we were doing in Tehran. We hardly talked to anyone. During the day and in the evening we are listening, processing materials, in the morning - to Stalin. And so all the days of the conference. I think that Joseph Vissarionovich was satisfied with our work, because there were no complaints. And when the conference was over, we were just as quietly taken out as they had been brought in."

The presence of Lavrenty Beria in Tehran during the meeting of the "Big Three" is also confirmed by the Stalinist translator V. M. Berezhkov. Valentin Mikhailovich recalls: "At the Tehran conference, only Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov officially entered the Soviet delegation. But Beria was also with them in the Soviet embassy. Every morning,

on my way to the building where the plenary meetings were held, I saw him driving around the territory of the embassy park in a Buick with tinted windows, turning up his collar and pulling his fedora over his forehead. Only the glasses of the pince-nez gleamed. Berezhkov, in all likelihood, did not suspect what an unethical business the formidable chief of the NKVD was doing in Tehran.

That's where the dog is buried! "Uncle Joe" really needed to hear what friend Winston and friend Franklin were talking about. That is why Iosif Vissarionovich gave the American president the main building of the Soviet embassy with such a broad gesture: "specialists from the special laboratory" had placed hidden microphones there in advance. And in order to encourage Roosevelt to take advantage of Stalin's "hospitality", a legend was invented about the impending German intelligence attempt on the leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Stalin's swindling attitude towards Western partners is reminiscent of a well-known anecdote. An American from the Texas hinterland visited London for the first time and returned from there with one hundred thousand dollars.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services" 69

- Bill, where do you get that kind of money from? - ask his fellow countrymen.

- Won poker.

- Oh, how lucky you are!

- Nothing special. I sat down to play with two British lords. Well, they made bets, equalized. I open my cards - three of a kind. The Englishman says: "I have a royal flush," and takes the money. I - to him: "Show me a flash, open the cards." And he - to me: "Well, what are you, sir, we are gentlemen." Gentlemen? Well, well ... Oh, and the map flooded me ...

Roosevelt and Churchill, and the chiefs of their guards, behaved like those lords, and in their thoughts did not allow that their ally and friend would spy on them in Tehran. And Stalin, having dishonestly overheard the secret considerations of Churchill and Roosevelt on the proposals made by him, had all the trump cards in his hands, so to speak. The diplomatic card is still like a pearl to him!

On what, however, were the warnings with which Molotov worried the Americans based? According to the book of the Hero of the Soviet Union Colonel Dmitry Nikolayevich Medvedev "Strong in Spirit", the first attempt on Stalin, US President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was prepared by German intelligence precisely in 1943, during a meeting of the "Big Three" in Tehran. Information about this came from the legendary intelligence agent Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov, who was in contact with the Medvedev detachment.

Before considering the events associated with this assassination attempt, whether it was really planned or fictitious, I want to dwell on the cash of the one whom millions of viewers of the films "Strong in Spirit" and "Special Detachment" and readers of the book by D. N. Medvedev remembered under the name of Ober-Lieutenant of the Wehrmacht Paul Siebert, an agent named Pooh and a partisan of the Medvedev detachment named Nikolai Vasilyevich Grachev.

He was an outstanding artist who played the role of Lieutenant Siebert better than the professional actors Gunar Tsillinsky and Alexander Mikhailov who later played the role of Kuznetsov himself in the cinema.

Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov was born on July 14 (27), 1911 in the remote village of Zyryanskaya, then in the Perm province (now this village is in the Sverdlovsk region). His Old Believer parents named him Nikanor, but in the early 1930s, for some unknown reason, Nikanor became Nikolai. Although not a drop of German blood was in Kuznetsov's veins, his appearance was completely Aryan: a tall, stately blond, a kind of blond beast! And, most surprisingly, he spoke fluent German.

The future intelligence officer mastered German so well because in the small town of Talitsa, where he studied at a seven-year school, there was a small colony of former Austrian prisoners who settled on the Urals. With them, little Nikanor spoke a lot of German, improving his conversational speech. He generally had a special aptitude for languages. As a schoolboy, he mastered Esperanto, which was then in vogue. But the Talitsky forestry technical school did not have time to graduate. In December 1929, Kuznetsov was expelled from the Komsomol "for concealing his kulak origin" and expelled from the technical school six months before the end of the course. In November 1931, he managed to be reinstated in the Komsomol, submitting certificates stating that his father served in the Red Army in civilian life, and before that, although he was a prosperous peasant, he "did not exploit" laborers. Nikolai did not begin to finish exams at the technical school.

In 1932, Kuznetsov, who was already working in the center of the Komi-Permyatsky

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fight@0

Kudymkare National District by a forest surveyor, was arrested on charges of embezzlement. The Chekists drew attention to a man with amazing linguistic abilities. After all, the Komi-Permyak language is not the easiest language for a Russian person, and Kuznetsov mastered it amazingly quickly. The arrest took place on June 4, and already on the 10th, Nikolai Ivanovich gave a subscription to work as a secret officer of the OGPU and received the nickname Kulik. It is possible that he was given a hint: if you refuse to be a sexot, we will add a political one to the criminal article. It may very well be that Kuznetsov was denounced - on his supposedly "counter-revolutionary conversations." He was placed in such a hopeless position that he could no longer refuse. Well, at the trial it suddenly turned out that Kuznetsov himself was not involved in the theft - it was his bosses who received money and food according to false statements. They were given from 4 to 8 years in the camps, and Kuznetsov was given a year of corrective labor at the place of service for negligence. The OGPU concocted a criminal record for him just in case...

By that time, Kuznetsov managed to get married and already divorced. On December 2, 1930, he registered a marriage with a local hospital nurse, Elena Petrovna Chugaeva. But already on March 4, 1931, the young people dispersed. Kuznetsov never married again. And not only in marriage. We have no information that he was ever intimate with a woman. For a young, handsome 20-year-old man, this is strange. Before the war, there were as many as 10 years left - did he really never meet a girl, didn't he fall in love? Subsequently, Nikolai Ivanovich did not tell anyone that in

young was married. Elena Chugaeva, who survived Kuznetsov for several decades, did not tell anyone about her first marriage. Many years after the death of Nikolai Ivanovich, she was found in Alma-Ata by the Kudymkar local historian G.K. Konin. Elena Petrovna willingly told him about her subsequent life, admitted that she had never told anyone about her such a short life with the legendary intelligence officer in the future. And she didn't say anything to Konin why she and Kuznetsov broke up so quickly and forever! What secret is hidden here?

It cannot be ruled out that impotence became the reason for the divorce and loneliness of Nikolai Ivanovich. This sad circumstance could only increase the importance of Kuznetsov for the Soviet competent authorities. That's great! The agent, a handsome man, will charm the women needed for the business, obtain important information, but to establish a dangerously long relationship with any of them and because of this, who knows, he will never be able to forget about the debt! Let us recall that many illegal Chekists became traitors precisely because of too strong attachment to a woman. Take, for example, the famous Georgy Agabekov, who published in Berlin in the 1930s the sensational books "GPU. Notes of a Chekist" and "Cheka at work". Love for the daughter of a British official forced the OGPU resident in Istanbul to break with the Soviets.

Or, perhaps, the OGPU insisted on a divorce, hoping to use Kuznetsov as an irresistible lover in the field of espionage? But the divorce took place a year and a half before Nikolai Ivanovich became Kulik.

In 1935, Kuznetsov started working in the technical control bureau of the design department of Uralmash. In Sverdlovsk, he met at the plant with German engineers. Undoubtedly, he acted here already on the instructions of the NKVD, probing the mood of foreign specialists. At the same time, he improved his German even more, mastering even the dialects of the German lands. In his one-room apartment, he immediately put on a gramophone and records with German songs, learned them by heart.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services@3.

Perhaps even then he was preparing for intelligence work in the Reich.

Even at school, Kuznetsov was engaged in a drama club, his game was remembered by many classmates. He was fond of theater both in Kudymkar and in Sverdlovsk, he did not miss a single premiere. So, little by little, he took lessons from the stage masters, so that later he could play his main role in life. He did not even dream then that he would immortalize his name in the role of Lieutenant Paul Siebert. In addition, Nikolai Ivanovich was also engaged in mountaineering: after all, it could also be useful to a scout, for example, when crossing the border in the mountains. And death will overtake him in the Carpathians...

In January 1936, Kuznetsov resigned from Uralmash. From now on, his only profession is an intelligence officer, or rather, for the time being, a counterintelligence officer, who monitors the actions of foreign specialists and Soviet citizens who come into contact with them. And the pseudonym was changed back in 1934 - when moving to Sverdlovsk, Kulik became a scientist.

Soon after leaving Uralmash, he had to go to jail again. In 1937, when the sad, terribly famous Yezhovshchina began, he was arrested and kept in prison for several months.

Sverdlovsk NKVD. It is difficult to say whether they were going to hang the "counter-revolutionary" Article 58 on him when the change of people began, Yagoda by Yezhov's people, or whether they were used as a "brood hen" in cells with "enemies of the people" to clarify their way of thinking. In any case, he was still a very young, honest worker, but blindly believing in the necessity of his work, and this, apparently, saved him.

After leaving prison, Kuznetsov was sent to Syktyvkar at the disposal of the new Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Komi ASSR, Mikhail Ivanovich Zhuravlev. Here he receives a new nickname - the Colonist. Nikolai Ivanovich, as a timber specialist, helped the people's commissar to fulfill the order of Moscow 06 "regulating logging" in the Northern Urals and earned him gratitude. Zhuravlev helped him to transfer to Moscow.

A few decades later, journalist Teodor Kirillovich Gladkov was told about the circumstances of this transfer by the former lieutenant general of state security Leonid Fedorovich Raikhman, in 1938 - the head of the department in the counterintelligence department of the Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD of the USSR:

"Zhuravlev often called me, consulted on some issues, so I was not surprised by his next call, it seems, in the middle of 1938.

- Leonid Fedorovich, - Zhuravlev said after the usual greetings, - there is one person in mind of me, still young, our unspoken collaborator. A very gifted individual. I am convinced that it should be used in the Center, it simply has nothing to do with us.

- Who is he? I asked.

- Forest specialist. Honest, smart, strong-willed, energetic, enterprising. And with amazing linguistic abilities. He is fluent in German, knows Esperanto and Polish. In a few months I learned the Komi-Permyak language so much that in Kudymkar they took it for their own ...

The offer interested me. I understood that Zhuravlev would not recommend anyone without serious reasons. And in recent years, many experienced, not fake, but real counterintelligence officers and intelligence officers have died in our country. Some lines and objects were simply bare or served by random people.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ "

- Send, - I said to Mikhail Ivanovich. - Let him call me at home. Several days passed, and in my apartment on Gorky Street the phone rang: Kuznetsov. It must have happened that at that very time I had an old comrade and colleague visiting me, who had just returned from a long business trip to Germany, where he worked from illegal positions. I looked at him expressively, and said into the phone:

- Comrade Kuznetsov, now they will speak German with you.

My friend talked with Kuznetsov for a few minutes on general topics,

then he returned the phone to me and, covering the microphone with his hand, said in surprise:

- He speaks like a native Berliner.

Later I learned that Kuznetsov was fluent in five or six dialects of the German language, in addition, he could speak, if necessary, in Russian with a German accent.

Raikhman also left us a detailed portrait of Kuznetsov, seen through the eyes of a professional counterintelligence officer: "...He came to my house. When he just stepped on the threshold, I just gasped: Aryan! Purebred Aryan. Above average height, slender, thin but strong, blond, straight nose, gray-blue eyes. A real German, but without such signs of aristocratic degeneration. And a wonderful bearing, like a regular military man, and this is a Ural forest man!

Leonid Fedorovich immediately realized that fate itself had sent him an unexpected gift:

"We badly needed people capable of actively resisting German agents in our country, primarily in Moscow. We requested Kolonist's personal file from Sverdlovsk, carefully studied his work in the Urals. Kuznetsov turned out to be a born scout (as they say, from God. True, what Nikolai Ivanovich did in the Urals and for the first time after moving to Moscow is called a simpler, lower word: an informer, or an informer. - B.S.). As a person, I liked him too. I liked to talk with him not only about business, but just like that, on abstract topics. Filled up, I told him: overgrow with connections.

And he began to make acquaintances among people who were obviously of operational interest to German intelligence."

In other words, Kuznetsov gained confidence in people, mainly from among the intelligentsia, whom the NKVD suspected of something, and informed the authorities about their actions and thoughts. For many, this awareness could cost freedom, and even life. Moreover, often the whole fault of Kuznetsov's interlocutors consisted only in careless conversations on abstract topics, with an independent outlook on life.

However, Kuznetsov was prepared for much more serious cases. Reichman reflected:

"The ideal option, of course, would be to send him (Kuznetsov. - B.S.) to study at our school (future illegal intelligence officers. - B.S.), after which he would be certified, at least, by a sergeant security officer (an officer rank corresponding to an army lieutenant. - B.S.), enlisted in some unit in the central office and began his service. But two things got in the way. Firstly, studying at our school, as in a regular military school, took a long time, and we needed a worker who would start work immediately (because of the impending threat of war in Europe. - B.S.) .. The second circumstance is of a somewhat scrupulous nature. Enrollment in a Naptu school or course was preceded by a lengthy procedure for studying the candidate, not only from a business and moral standpoint, but also from the point of view of

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@3ÿ

his personal purity. Here our personnel departments were merciless, and in the past Kuznetsov had a dubious social origin, according to some reports, his father was either a fist or a White Guard, expulsion from the Komsomol, a criminal record, finally. Yes, with such a questionnaire, it's not like they wouldn't be enrolled in school, you see, they would demand to arrest him for the third time ... "

Here Leonid Fedorovich either really does not know the whole history of Kuznetsov, or is simply disingenuous. After all, the Chekists themselves arranged the first arrest of Nikolai Ivanovich. And the second one, most likely, was produced, as they say, for operational purposes. Kuznetsov's life aspirations back in Sverdlovsk look too purposeful. First of all, I will note his desire to master the German language perfectly, which was already beyond the needs of counterintelligence and information work among German engineers in the Urals. And how to consider his passion for the theater, the desire to play not only on stage, but already in life? Those who knew Nikolai Ivanovich recalled that even in the 1930s he very successfully pretended to be someone he had never really been: a correspondence student, a foreign specialist, a test engineer ... In the library of the Sverdlovsk Industrial Institute, Kuznetsov carefully studied the literature on Germany and German industry. Perhaps he was expected to be used for industrial espionage in this country.

In general, it seems that from the beginning of the 1930s, Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov was trained according to a purely individual program for a future illegal intelligence officer with a special assignment, observing the strictest secrecy. Therefore, they did not determine the school. Raikhman may not have been fully aware of this operation, or even after decades did not want to reveal the methods of Chekist work. In any case, what Leonid Fedorovich reports about the further fate of Kuznetsov corresponds to our assumption:

"In the end, we registered Kuznetsov as a highly classified special agent with a salary at the rate of a personnel detective of the central apparatus. The case is almost unique in our practice, in any case, I don't remember such a second one ...

Kuznetsov was an extremely enterprising and imaginative person. So, he bought himself a camera, accessories to it, mastered photography and later he perfectly took pictures of German materials and documents that fell into his hands. He learned to drive a car, and when during the war, among other personal documents, he was issued a driver's license, allegedly issued in Koenigsberg, he only had to remember how the German traffic rules differ from ours.

The colonist was talented by nature, absorbed knowledge like a sponge, studied eagerly, quickly grew as a professional. At the same time, he was extremely serious, restrained, sober in his assessments and his reports. Thanks to these qualities, we were able to later use him as a control agent to verify information obtained in a different way, confirm it or refute it.

By the beginning of the war, he had successfully completed several of my important assignments. My comrade, also a prominent counterintelligence worker, Viktor Nikolaevich Ilyin, who was then in charge of working with the creative intelligentsia, was also very pleased with him. Thanks to Ilyin, Kuznetsov quickly acquired connections in theatrical, in particular, ballet Moscow. It was

important, since many diplomats, including German ones, and

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services" 4.

established scouts gravitated toward actresses, especially dancers. At one time, the question of appointing Kuznetsov as one of the administrators ... of the Bolshoi Theater was even seriously discussed.

Our state security agencies were superbly indifferent to the Bolshoi Theatre. The already mentioned Stalin's guard, Major A. Rybin, after the war became the commandant of the Bolshoi Theater, and obviously not because he was an inveterate theatergoer. It was always full of foreigners here, and many ballerinas received a second salary at the Lubyanka for a reason...

Sudoplatov, who in February 1939 was appointed deputy chief of intelligence of the NKVD, and in 1940 organized the assassination of Trotsky, left a testimony about the work of Kuznetsov in Moscow in the pre-war years:

"Kuznetsov was recruited by the local NKVD and in 1939 sent to Moscow to study. He was trained individually as a special agent for possible use against the German embassy in Moscow. A handsome blond, he could pass for a German, i.e. Soviet citizen of German origin. He had a network of informers among Moscow artists. As an actor, he was introduced to some foreign diplomats. Gradually, the German embassy workers began to pay attention to an interesting young man of typical Aryan appearance, with a well-established reputation as a connoisseur of ballet. They were led by Raikhman, deputy head of the counterintelligence department, and Ilyin, state security commissar for work with the intelligentsia (die, Pavel Anatolyevich, you can't say better! - B.S.). Kuznetsov, performing their tasks, always received maximum information not only from diplomatic workers, but also from friends whom he made among artists and writers. The personal file of agent Kuznetsov contains information about him as a lover of most of the Moscow ballet stars, some of them he shared with German diplomats in the interests of business.

Kuznetsov participated in operations to intercept German diplomatic mail, since from time to time diplomatic couriers stayed at the Metropol and National hotels, and not at the German embassy. Using his diplomatic connections, Kuznetsov was able to warn us about when the diplomatic couriers were going to arrive and when it would be possible for our agents, stationed in these hotels and equipped with the necessary photographic equipment, to quickly reshoot the documents.

I have not read Kuznetsov's personal file. At my request, the FSB refused to give out any materials about the intelligence officer, indicating that everything that they considered possible to declassify was handed over to Teodor Gladkov for his book on Kuznetsov "From the scene of the assassination attempt ...". In this book, nothing is said about Nikolai Ivanovich's relationship with ballerinas. But here I am inclined to believe Sudoplatov, although if my assumption about Kuznetsov's impotence is correct, then for ballerinas he could only be a friend, an admirer. This just helped him sincerely and friendly to represent (and, in the cynical Chekist expression, "to put") ballerinas to the right people from the Moscow diplomatic corps. Kuznetsov knew how to charm women. Here, for example, is one of Kuznetsov's superiors, Lieutenant General

State Security Officer Vasily Stepanovich Ryasnoy recalled how Kolonist started a light flirtation with the maid of the German naval attaché in Moscow, Norbert Wilhelm von Baumbach. While he was taking her to the cinema, the Chekists conducted a secret search in Baumbach's apartment and photographed the documents they needed. Kuznetsov was very good at taking a girl to a theater, cinema or restaurant, entertaining her with a witty conversation. But if

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@5

he, a scout, really shared his passion with one of the diplomats, this would create complex and dangerous psychological problems for him in this already eternally difficult love triangle.

My assumption may be wrong, and it is by no means excluded that in fact this man was a real lover. Here Gladkov, for example, mentions a certain Oksana Obolenskaya, whom Kuznetsov met on the eve of the war. The widow of D.N. Medvedev, Tatyana Ilyinichna, told the journalist about her. Ksana Kuznetsov introduced himself as a Soviet German Rudolf Wilhelmovich Schmidt, an aviation engineer (or a pilot - it is not known for sure). When the war began, Obolenskaya preferred to part with a man with a German surname: people with such surnames immediately began to disappear from Moscow ... Kuznetsov seemed to be upset, especially when rumors reached him that Ksana had married a red commander with a true Russian surname (think only, poor Schmidt could not confess to her that he was Kuznetsov). And when, in January 1944, Kuznetsov met with Medvedev for the last time before a trip to Lvov, from where he was not destined to return, he asked Dmitry Nikolayevich to visit Ksana in Moscow if something happened and tell who Rudolf Schmidt really was. In November 1944, shortly after Kuznetsov was awarded the Gold Star of a Hero, Dmitry Nikolaevich went to the indicated address on Petrovka. Whether he met with Xana is unknown. Tatyana Ilyinichna only recalled that her husband had returned angry and irritated. Today it is definitely difficult to say whether this story was real. No documents confirming the existence of Xana could not be found.

Perhaps the leadership of the NKVD and the NKGB had a plan to use Kuznetsov against England and America. If this happened, he, with his unique abilities, would perhaps outshine the glory of Rudolf Abel and Conon the Young. Kuznetsov's report has been preserved with a request to help him enter the English department of the Institute of Foreign Languages. But the impending war with Germany, obviously, forced to abandon

such a plan.

With the outbreak of war, Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov began to prepare for work behind enemy lines. Rudolf Wilhelmovich Schmidt was given a white ticket - an indefinite exemption from military service, so that they would not be taken to the front through the draft board. Kuznetsov also received a new underground nickname - in August 1942 he became Pooh from Kolonist - although he also continued to use the old one. When in October 1941 the situation near Moscow became threatening, Kuznetsov was planned to be left underground in case the Germans captured the capital. This, fortunately, did not happen. During the Soviet counter-offensive near Moscow, according to L. F. Raikhman, Kuznetsov was baptized by fire. With a reconnaissance mission, he was thrown into the rear of the German 9th Army, which opposed the Kalinin Front near the ancient Russian city of Rzhev. Soon

Kuznetsov returned safely. However, in his last report, dated June 3, 1942, the intelligence officer does not confirm Raikhman's assertion. In this report, everything that happened to him from the beginning of the war to the transfer to Ukraine is clear:

"... In the very first days after the attack of the German armies on our country, I filed a report addressed to my immediate superior with a request to use me in the active struggle against German fascism at the front or in the rear of the German TROOPS that invaded our land.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@6

To this report, I was then answered that there was a prospect of transferring me to the rear of the Germans behind the front line for reconnaissance and sabotage activities, and I was ordered to wait for an order. Later, in September 1941, I was told that in view of some notoriety of my personality among the diplomatic corps of the Axis Powers in Moscow before the war ... in order to avoid unnecessary sacrifices, sending me to the Germans was not yet expedient. It was then decided to temporarily send me under the guise of a German soldier to a camp of German prisoners of war to carry out intelligence service. I was given training under the direction of the appropriate person from military intelligence. This training gave me elementary knowledge and information about the German army ... On October 16, 1941, this plan was canceled, and I was informed that I would be left in Moscow in case the capital was occupied by the German army ... At the beginning of 1942, I was informed that the prospect transferring me to the Germans became relevant again. For this purpose, I was given elementary training of a biographical nature (that's when Paul Siebert appeared. - B. S. I). However, the implementation of this plan has not yet happened for reasons unknown to me. Thus, a year has passed without a few days since I have been fully supported by Soviet intelligence and do not bring any benefit, being in a state of forced conservation and complete inactivity, waiting for an order (a year of idleness will knock anyone down, and Nikolai Ivanovich was by nature overactive person - B.S.). The establishment of independent ties of the pre-war type is excluded, since the mere fact that a person of "German origin" was left in Moscow during the war is in itself suspicious. Naturally, like every Soviet person, I am burning with the desire to benefit my Motherland at a time when the question of the existence of our state and ourselves is being decided. The endless waiting (almost a year!) and forced inaction, while realizing that I certainly have the strength and ability to bring significant benefits to my Motherland at a time when the question is being decided to be or not to be, terribly depresses me. All my adult life I have been in the service of Soviet intelligence. She raised me and taught me to hate fascism and all the enemies of my Motherland. So I was not brought up for the same reason, so that at the moment when the hour of trial came, to force me to vegetate in inactivity and eat Soviet bread for nothing? In the end, as a Russian person, I have the right to demand that I be given the opportunity to benefit my Fatherland in the fight against the worst enemy that has invaded the borders of my Motherland and threatens our entire existence! Is it easy for me, in inaction, to read the reports of our newspapers for a year about those monstrous atrocities of the German invaders on our soil, these wild beasts?

Moreover, I know perfectly the language of these animals, their habits, character, habits, way of life. I specialized in this beast. In my hands is a strong and terrible weapon for the enemy, much more serious than a firearm. So why am I still sitting by the sea and waiting for the weather?

I consider further inaction to be criminal before my conscience and Motherland. Therefore, I ask you to bring this report to the attention of the supreme leadership. In conclusion, I state the following: if for some reason it is impossible to carry out the plan worked out to bring me to the Germans, then I would gladly perform the following functions:

1. Participation in military sabotage and reconnaissance as part of the parachute formations of the Red Army in enemy territory.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ y

2. Group sabotage activities in the form of German troops in the rear of the Germans.

3. Partisan activity as part of one of the partisan detachments.

4. I am fully aware that the possibility of my death while performing reconnaissance missions is very likely, but I will boldly go to work, since the consciousness of the rightness of our cause instills in me great strength and confidence in the final victory. This consciousness gives me the strength to fulfill my duty to the Motherland to the end.

It is significant that Kuznetsov allowed himself to combine reconnaissance and sabotage work. The same opinion was shared by the leaders of Soviet intelligence. Meanwhile, such a combination harms, at least, the receipt of intelligence information. A saboteur, of course, can simultaneously, before preparing a sabotage and after it, collect some information about the enemy. Taking documents from the dead soldiers, capturing the language - all this will not harm his main mission in any way: the destruction of one or another enemy object. But as a rule, it is impossible to obtain serious information in this way. On the contrary, if an intelligence officer, having access to information of a strategic nature, is distracted by carrying out terrorist and sabotage acts, this can bring great harm to the cause. After all, he not only ceases to engage in his main business for a long time, but also completely unjustifiably, if his vocation is otherwise, he risks dying or falling into the hands of enemy counterintelligence.

According to the same Raykhman, only in 1942 Kuznetsov was transferred from the counterintelligence department to the intelligence department, at the disposal of Sudoplatov, leaving, however, formally in the "tacit state" of counterintelligence. I suspect that all this was done only for the purpose of conspiracy, while in reality Nikolai Ivanovich was prepared from the very beginning for intelligence activities in Germany. But the war made its own adjustments. Now, for some time, Sudoplatov's native Ukraine was under German occupation. And it was there that the future Lieutenant Paul Siebert was sent.

As part of the Avengers partisan detachment under the command of D.N. Medvedev, Kuznetsov was to land in the forests near Rovno. This

a small Western Ukrainian city became the center of the Reichskommissariat "Ukraine". The soldiers of the Medvedev detachment knew the agent named Pooh - Kuznetsov as Nikolai Vasilyevich Grachev. In Rovno, he was supposed to appear as Oberleutnant of the Wehrmacht Paul Siebert.

Before landing behind enemy lines on the night of August 25, 1942, Kuznetsov thoroughly studied the German armed forces so as not to get into trouble when meeting with German patrols and talking with officers of the Rovno garrison. To do this, he even spent several weeks in the officers' barracks of the camp of German prisoners of war in Krasnogorsk, and no one suspected who this handsome infantry chief lieutenant really was. And he also perfectly mastered the shooting of German weapons. After all, his main task, alas, was to be the implementation of terrorist acts against senior officials of the German occupation administration in Ukraine. Using such a unique agent for this kind of purpose was like heating the stove with banknotes. But in the summer of 1942, the position of the Red Army was extremely difficult, and the leaders of the NKVD, People's Commissar L.P. Beria and his first deputy V.N. Merkulov, the former head of the NKGB, were forced to

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@8

throw all your strength into solving immediate problems. Merkulov and signed an order to send Kuznetsov to Medvedev's detachment. Not excluded. that the Chekists counted on terror - the liquidation of high-ranking employees of the Reichskommissariat - to disorganize the occupation administration and ignite an uprising against the Germans in Western Ukraine. However, the local population, by no means already sympathizing with the Germans, was, as always, very wary of the Russian Bolsheviks and was not going to fight for Stalin. The Ukrainian Insurgent Army enjoyed popularity, proclaiming the fight against both the Germans and the Bolsheviks. So the UPA was the same enemy for the Medvedev detachment as the German troops and the Ukrainian auxiliary police subordinate to them.

When landing, Kuznetsov was unlucky: he lost his boot in the swamp. But he arrived at the gathering place of a group of 11 people on time, reported to Medvedev as expected, his hands were at his sides, and one foot was bare...

Nikolai Ivanovich had to put on the uniform of a German chief lieutenant. But his first visit to the capital of the Reichskommissariat was delayed by almost two months. It was necessary to reconnoiter the situation in the city, to establish contacts with agents. It suddenly turned out that Nikolai Ivanovich had one feature dangerous for an illegal intelligence officer: he spoke in his sleep, and, of course, in Russian. For many years Kuznetsov lived alone and did not know it. Only in the detachment did the neighbors in the tent pay attention to the fact that the fighter Grachev (only Medvedev, his deputy for intelligence, Alexander Alexandrovich Lukin, and the cover group knew about Zibert) was screaming in his sleep. By the way, this fact indirectly indicates that Kuznetsov did not have to sleep with women. Otherwise, one of them would have told him about this strange, frightening habit long ago.

From talking in a dream I had to urgently unlearn. Kuznetsov asked his comrades to wake him up as soon as he spoke in his sleep. Sometimes he was awakened several times during the night. In the end, he decided that if he stayed in Rovno for the night, he would go to bed only when there was one in the room.

Here I will jump ahead. Perhaps, understanding or anticipating that he would not have his own children, Kuznetsov was thinking about an adopted son. During one of his trips to Rovno, he found a four-year-old boy Pinya, who miraculously got out of the ghetto, and brought him to the detachment. The partisans warmed and fed the baby, and then sent by plane to the mainland. Nikolai Ivanovich dreamed of adopting Pinya after the war. Did not have time...

For the first trip to Rovno, which took place only on October 19, 1942, the officer's jacket, in the absence of an iron, had to be ironed with an ax heated on a fire.

The legend of Lieutenant Paul Siebert was, as they say, iron. Wounded in France, and before that in Poland, awarded the Iron Cross, from the beginning of the war against the USSR, he was listed as an extraordinary representative of the economic command in the front-line regions, organizing the supply of timber to the front. The post of quartermaster opened the doors of many German institutions in Rovno to the intelligence officer. But, since front-line officers did not like rear officers, Zibert-Kuznetsov slightly changed his legend and began to tell that he was wounded in the battle near Moscow. But this is later. About his very first day in Rovno, Nikolai Ivanovich wrote the following report:

"On October 19, 1942, at 7.00, I approached from the north to the main asphalt highway Korets - Rovno near the village of Bela Krinitsa, in Ekm from the city. Traffic on the highway ... from 6.00 to 22.00 German

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Fighting@®9

time (from 7.00 to 23.00 Moscow time) is very busy. Every 15 minutes, cars with 3-4 officers and officials, a truck with soldiers or cargo, motorcycles with sidecars, and officers in them. Lots of bikes.

Bicycles do not have any numbers. All officers and soldiers are dressed in autumn, in good overcoats and raincoats ... Officers in caps and very rarely in caps ...

At 7 km from the city, a procession came across to me. Ahead are 2 semi-armored cars with 4 officers in each. Then a large black Mercedes car with the curtains down, and behind it a truck with 20 soldiers, and behind it a motorcycle with a sidecar and an officer. Undoubtedly, an important person passed by. Cars go at high speed...

There is no regular control on the highway. Lots of uniformed cops, unarmed. Half-burnt tanks and armored vehicles are lying in the ditches (undoubtedly, Soviet ones, left over from the summer of 1941. - B.S.). Occasionally there are transports of Soviet prisoners of war. They have a terrible look of exhausted people to the limit. Their guards are Germans and policemen with a bandage on their sleeves and a swastika on their caps. Swastika made of tinplate, 1 sq. see, and on the bandage there is a German inscription "In the service of the German armed forces." The guards are armed with rifles.

Before entering the city along the Koretskoye Highway, there are gas stations and the Todt organization, as well as a camp for Soviet prisoners of war, on the left side. The highway joins a city called

"German street". She is very lively. At the entrance to the city there is a huge announcement: "Attention of the military! Upon arrival in the city, immediately register with the local commandant's office. Check-in and check-out is required. Without it, the occupation of the apartment and the overnight stay are prohibited.

There are two car parks on Nemetskaya street, 100 cars each. They stand day and night. The main German military establishments are located on this street. Rivne is a city of rear military establishments. Many staff officers, officials, the Gestapo, security police.

I was in the city from 8.00 to 19.00 German time. I was greeted by about 300 soldiers and officers. The highest rank that met me was a colonel (generals don't walk around the city on foot. - B.S.). I saw representatives of the Finnish, Slovak, Romanian and Italian armies (few). The main contingent is Germans of middle and older ages. Among them there are invalids, curves, etc., but many of them are quite young.

Pass the cadets of the flight and police schools. Everyone welcomes exemplary, according to the charter. Soldiers in the city walk with a bayonet on their belts, officers and non-commissioned officers - with pistols "Walter". Many elegantly dressed German women. The officers are stationed in private apartments and partly in apartments along the Dubno highway near the airfield. Communication headquarters is located along Slovacka Street 4. During my observation of this headquarters, a colonel and an air force captain entered. Along Koenigsbergskaya Street, 50 meters from Nemetskaya Street, the gendarmerie is located, on the contrary - the Gestapo (in reality - the SD, the security department of the imperial Main Security Directorate, which performed counterintelligence functions and replaced the Gestapo in the occupied territories of the USSR; in Soviet documents it was mistakenly called the Gestapo. - B.S.), next to the Gebitkommissariat and then the Reichskommissariat. This building is heavily guarded. There is a political police station along Nemecka Street 26.

Reception at the Reichskommissar on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Koch supposedly lives

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Upstairs. His private apartment is at 23 Monopolevaya Street.

The city is flooded with spies, agents of the Gestapo. In the streets near the stalls, civilians rub with bicycles ... SS officers desperately speculate on state property, cigarettes, tobacco, etc. I talked in a cafe with two such officers. They are busy trying to cash in and not get to the front ... "

This report does not contain operational information that could be used by the command of the Red Army. But for the historian it is valuable even today, because it conveys what is called the life of the war. It was no coincidence that Kuznetsov recorded all these little things: what soldiers and officers were wearing, how documents were checked, where the main institutions were located. And especially: how the residence of the Reichskommissar Erich Koch is guarded, where he lives and when he receives petitioners. After all, he, Kuznetsov, had to "hunt for Koch", and then all this was necessary for other intelligence officers who were to work in Rovno and other cities behind enemy lines. He even described in detail what badge the police officers had on their caps: the craftsmen from the Medvedev detachment and in Moscow had to make

such are caps for partisans. And Kuznetsov himself had to change something in his equipment. Although they threw him near Rovno just before the fall, for some reason they supplied him only with summer uniforms. Urgently sent the autumn and winter form. And soon the Warsaw tailor Yefim Drakhman appeared in the detachment, who was lucky enough to escape from the ghetto. Once he sewed theatrical costumes first-class. Now the cutter supplied the theatrical wardrobe for a play in which death was played. And Yefim did not disappoint. The jackets, breeches and overcoat sewn by him for Siebert not only sat on him like a glove, but did not differ in a single detail from those worn by Wehrmacht officers.

It turned out that the cap, in which Siebert appeared in Rivne, is worn there only by those sent from the front. Rear officers prefer a cap. I had to urgently get a cap and learn how to put it on and take it off correctly: the Germans did it differently than the Soviet commanders, and it was easy to get burned out on such a trifle. And the parabellum, with which Siebert initially went, was more suitable for front-line officers, while the rear officers preferred the more compact Walter. The scout also changed weapons.

Kuznetsov's documents were reliable. They were made by masters of their craft on genuine German letterheads. More than 70 times Siebert was stopped by patrols and never noticed anything. Only, perhaps, during the last check, when the data on the pseudo-chief lieutenant had already been sent out, the documents did not save ...

In Rovno, Kuznetsov visited restaurants and casinos, got acquainted with officers, received from them the necessary information, mainly about the transfer of certain divisions to various sectors of the front. However, the value of such information was short: only a few days. These days were just spent on getting to Medvedev's detachment and transmitting a radiogram from it to Moscow. By the time it reached the Soviet command, the advance of enemy formations was already fixed by front-line intelligence. True, in November 1942, at the height of the Battle of Stalingrad, Medvedev took the risk of sending a radio operator to Rovno, but sixteen days later she had to be recalled to the detachment. In a city with direction finders and a lot of police, it was too dangerous to work. So it turned out that, having the abilities of an excellent intelligence officer, Kuznetsov in this matter could only bring very

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limited benefit.

The main thing that Zibert-Kuznetsov did in Rovno was terror. He managed to destroy several high-ranking officials of the Reichskommissariat. High-ranking, I note, only on the scale of German-occupied Ukraine. In the history of the Second World War, their names were preserved only thanks to the Kuznetsov assassination attempts. The main target for Lieutenant Paul Siebert was the Reichskommissar himself and part-time Gauleiter of East Prussia (in our opinion at that time - the first, say, secretary of the East Prussian regional party committee) Erich Koch. Kuznetsov even managed to get an appointment with him. The suggestion was right. Valentina Dovger, our intelligence officer, who lived in Rovno, was mobilized to be sent to forced labor in Germany. She sent a statement to Koch that she was "Volksdeutsche" - ethnic

a German woman and the fiancée of Wehrmacht Lieutenant Paul Siebert and asked to be left in Rovno to work in one of the German institutions. As a result, Valya Dovger and Paul Siebert were invited to an appointment with the Reichskommissar: the lieutenant was busy with his "bride". In the description of Dmitry Nikolaevich Medvedev, the events on that day, May 31, 1943, developed as follows:

"Adjutant Babakh, a dapper officer in the uniform of a Hauptmann, immediately recognized the protégés of his fellow countryman Schmidt (Koch's dog trainer. - B.S.), for whom he, Babakh, himself prepared passes in advance. He escorted them to the second floor, to the reception room. Several officers were already sitting here. In an armchair by the window, waiting for a call, the corpulent general was bored.

- I will announce your arrival, - Babakh said and disappeared behind the door.

A small, nimble army officer asked Kuznetsov confidentially, nodding at Valya:

- Yours?

- Yes, - said Siebert, looking down at the army man, making it clear that he - Siebert - is not at all interested in the opinions of others.

"They say the Gauleiter is in a good mood today," the officer said, as if apologizing for his inappropriate question. We've been waiting for him for over an hour.

The heavy door opened. An adjutant appeared in the waiting room.

"They are ready to receive you," he said, looking at Valya. He stopped Kuznetsov, who had risen from his seat:

- Only fraulein.

Kuznetsov was confused. He did not expect that they would not call him, but Valya. Having mastered himself, he sat down in an armchair and addressed the officer with the first meaningless phrase that came to mind.

... Valya took only a step forward, when a huge shepherd dog jumped up to her in two jumps. Valya shuddered.

There was a loud cry: "In place!" - and the dog moved away.

Only now Valya saw that in the depths, under a portrait of Hitler, at a massive table, lounging in an armchair, sat a well-fed, well-groomed German with a mustache like Hitler, with long red eyelashes. At some distance from him stood three Gestapo men in black uniforms.

Koch silently pointed to a chair in the middle of the room. As soon as Valya approached the chair, one of the Gestapo men stood between her and Koch, the other took a place behind the back of the chair. The third was against the wall, behind Koch, slightly to the right of the Gauleiter...

- Why don't you want to go to Germany? Valya heard Koch's voice. He sat staring at the piece of paper, which she recognized as her statement.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The Secret Fight of the Secret Service0>?"

Valya was a little embarrassed and slowed down with an answer.

- Why don't you want to go to Germany? Koch repeated, raising his eyes to the girl. - You, a girl of German blood, would be useful in the Fatherland.

"My mother is seriously ill," Valya said quietly, trying to speak as convincingly as possible. - Mom is sick, and besides her, I have sisters ... After the death of my father, I earn and support the whole family. I beg you, Herr Gauleiter, to allow me to stay here. I know German, Russian, Ukrainian and Polish, I can be useful here in Germany.

- Where did you meet Officer Siebert? Koch asked, looking straight at her.

- I met by chance, on the train ... Then he stopped by us on the way from the front ...

— Do you have documents that your ancestors came from Germany?

- The father had the documents. They disappeared when he was killed.

Koch became kinder. Speaking first in German, then in Polish, which he was fluent in, he asked the girl about the mood in the city, wondered which other of the German officers she knew. When, among her acquaintances, she named not only employees of the Reichskommissariat, but also the Gestapo, including von Ortel (we will talk about him later. - B.S.), Koch was satisfied.

- Okay, go ahead. Let Lieutenant Siebert come to me...

- Heil Hitler! - crossed the threshold of the office and throwing his hand forward, exclaimed Kuznetsov.

- Heil! - lazily sounded at the table. - You can sit down. I do not approve of your choice, lieutenant! If all our officers will take under the protection of girls from the conquered peoples, then who will work in our industry?

"The lady-in-waiting is of Aryan blood," Kuznetsov retorted respectfully.

- Are you sure?

- I knew her father. The poor fellow fell victim to bandits.

The gauleiter's palpable, groping gaze fell on the officer's Iron Crosses, on a round badge with a swastika (a detail invented by the author: Siebert-Kuznetsov was not a member of the NSDAP at all, since membership in the National Socialist Party of Wehrmacht officers was very rare, and a party badge would have attracted intelligence officers completely unnecessary attention of the Germans. - B. S.).

- Are you a member of the National Socialist Party?

"Yes, Herr Gauleiter.

- Where did you get the crosses?

- The first in France, the second on the Eastern Front.
- What are you doing now?
- After being wounded, I temporarily work to supply my sector of the front.
- Where is your unit?
- Near Kursk.
- Near Kursk?

Koch's probing gaze met Kuznetsov's.

- And you - a lieutenant, a front-line soldier, a national socialist - are going to marry a girl of dubious origin ?!

"We are engaged," Kuznetsov admitted, feigning embarrassment. - And I have to get a vacation and I'm going with the bride to my parents, to ask for their blessings.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services©3}

_ - Where were you born?

- In Koenigsberg. My father has a family estate... I am the only son.

- Do you intend to return to your place after the war?

_ No, I intend to stay in Russia.

-Do you like this country? - Something similar to irony was heard in Koch's words.

- My duty is to do everything so that we all like her, Herr Gauleiter! - firmly and clearly, expressing extreme conviction in the justice of what he is talking about, said Kuznetsov.

- Decent answer! - the Gauleiter remarked approvingly and pushed Valya's statement lying in front of him towards him.

At that moment, for the first time, Kuznetsov physically felt the cocked "valter" lying in the right pocket of his trousers for the first time with such acuteness. The hand slowly slid down. He raised his eyes and saw the bared mouth of a shepherd dog, saw the guarded Gestapo. It seemed that all eyes crossed on this hand, crawling to the pocket and frozen here.

No, shoot - no way. They won't even let you put your hand in your pocket, let alone pull it out with a gun. At the slightest movement, the Gestapo men are ready to rush forward, and the one standing behind the back of the chair leans over with his whole body, so that somewhere near his ear you can hear his breathing, leans in, ready to intercept his hand at any moment ...

Meanwhile the Gauleiter, leaning back in his chair and listening to his own

voice continues:

- For a person who, like you, is going to devote his life to the development of eastern lands, it is useful to remember something. What do you think, lieutenant, who is more dangerous for us here: Ukrainians or Poles?

The lieutenant has his own opinion on this matter.

- Ite and others, Herr Gauleiter! he answers.

"I don't need much, lieutenant," Koch continues. - I need a Pole to kill a Ukrainian when he meets a Ukrainian, and vice versa, that a Ukrainian kills a Pole. If before that they shoot a Jew on the way, that will be just what I need. Do you understand me?

- Subtle thought, Herr Gauleiter!

- Nothing subtle. Everything is very simple. Some are quite naive about Germanization. They think that we need Russians, Ukrainians and Poles, whom we would force to speak German. But we don't need Russians, Ukrainians, or Poles. We need fertile lands... We will Germanize the land, not the people. The Germans will live here!

Koch takes a breath, looks at the lieutenant intently:

- However, I see that you are not strong in politics.

"I'm a soldier and I don't understand politics," Kuznetsov answered modestly (the answer for a member of the NSDAP, you see, is rather strange. - B.S.).

- In this case, quit messing with the girls and get back to your unit as soon as possible. Keep in mind that it is in your Kursk sector that the Fuhrer is preparing a surprise for the Bolsheviks. Of course, we shouldn't talk about it.

- You can be calm, Herr Gauleiter!

How are your comrades at the front?

- Oh, everyone is determined! the lieutenant replies briskly, looking into the Gauleiter's eyes.

- Many were frightened by recent events?

- Stalingrad? ... He strengthened our spirit!

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services 0".

Gauleiter is clearly satisfied with this optimistic response. He gives the officer another curious look and finally takes up his girlfriend's statement. He's writing a resolution."

Medvedev based his narrative on everything, both on personal conversations with Kuznetsov and Valentina Dovger, and on the intelligence report. And added something. For example, according to legend, Siebert was not a nobleman,

the owner of the family estate (then a "background" is attached to the surname), but only a forester (the pre-war profession of Kuznetsov came in handy), and then the manager on the estate of Prince Shlobitten. Most importantly, Medvedev, in his documentary and fiction book, almost entirely composed the dialogue between Siebert and Koch.

Let us see how the famous meeting between the terrorist and the Gauleiter actually took place. We have such an opportunity, since Kuznetsov's account of his visit to Koch has been preserved. Here's what it says:

"... On a phaeton with Valya, Schmidt and Koch's dog, we drove up to the Reichskommissariat, entered the Wachtzimmer (guardroom. - B.S.), where there were about twenty gendarmes with machine guns, and took a pass to Koch. The gendarme at the gate let us into the courtyard of the Koch Palace. We passed by the second gendarme, the adjutant met us in the yard. He led me and Valya to the ground floor of the palace, where we were met in the reception room by a lady and a close associate of Kokha. Schmidt and the dog remained in the yard. In the reception room we were asked to wait, we were informed about our arrival on the second floor and asked to go up. We ended up in Koch's apartment. Here we were met by Koch's adjutant or personal secretary, who asked us to sit down and began to ask about the purpose of the visit, after which he went to Koch's office and returned with three high-ranking bodyguards of Koch with crosses on his chest (obviously, they were SD officers. - B. S.). They introduced themselves after examining us and asked Valya to come into the office.

I stayed to wait. One left with Valya, two remained, silently looking at me ...

In my pocket, cocked with the fuse removed, there was a "Walter" with special cartridges (with poison. - B.S.), another pistol in a holster. In the corridor in front of the office I was met by a black bloodhound, one of the close ones followed me. Entering the office, I saw Koch, and in front of him were two who sat between me and Koch, the third was standing behind me, behind the chair was a black dog. The conversation lasted about thirty to forty minutes. All the time the guards looked at my hands as if spellbound. Koch did not give me a hand, he greeted me from a distance with a show of his hand, the distance was about five meters. There were two people sitting between me and Koch, and another one was sitting behind my chair. There was no way, therefore, to put his hand in his pocket. I was in a summer uniform, and there was no grenade with me.

Koch scolded me very meticulously because I decided to ask for non-German blood for a girl. Koch said: "How can you vouch for her, we had many cases proving that it is impossible to vouch for anyone today (about the presence of "Aryan blood". - B.S.)". Koch asked me where I served, in what battles I participated, in which regiment, how long have I known the girl, where she is from, why I didn't first make inquiries about her to the Gestapo, where are my relatives, what cities have I been to, where and for whom my father works, where is my mother, specialty, religion Koch told me that if they come to ask for every girl whose father is killed, then we will have no one to send to Germany ...

In conclusion, he asked me how and why the Ukrainians are slaughtering the Poles, in my opinion, who is worse, Poles or Russians, how to destroy

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services

the resistance of the Poles and Russians at the same time, what is the opinion of our officers and soldiers about the preparation of an offensive in the East.

Finally, after a detailed questioning about the fighting in the East, Koch took a pencil and wrote on Valya's application: "I agree with getting a job in Rovno. Koch. He handed Valya's statement to me and warned me of responsibility if Valya turned out to be a spy. (Here's a laugh: addressing a real - and even some - spy with such a warning. - B.S.) Greetings again, and I left, surrounded by guards. In anticipation, they wrote down my name and field mail address, let me out through other doors, congratulated me a lot, even one general shook hands (this "general", but in reality the colonel, chief judge of Ukraine Alfred Funk, Kuznetsov, of course, was not for a handshake in five half a month repaid with a bullet.-B.S.), then we walked around the palace, thanked the adjutant for the services, the latter gave me and Schmidt two packs of cigarettes. We got out, handed over our passes and left for the city."

See the difference?! It's one thing: "... it is in your Kursk sector that the Fuhrer is preparing a surprise for the Bolsheviks." And quite another: "... what is the opinion of our officers and soldiers about the preparation of an offensive in the East?" with a phrase about the preparation by the Wehrmacht of an offensive - not a retreat - on the Eastern Front. Maybe the Gauleiter wanted to cheer up the young front-line lieutenant like this, knowing absolutely nothing about the military plans "in the East". Like, nothing, after Stalingrad we will repay them. Yes and how could he know? Apart from Hitler, only a few high-ranking generals and field marshals were aware of the Citadel, but not the Gauleiters.

By the way, according to legend, part of Siebert was located near Leningrad, and not at all near Kursk. Even assuming that heavy traffic through the Ukraine in recent weeks made Koch think about the upcoming offensive and, after thinking logically, he came to the conclusion that it would take place on the southern wing of the Eastern Front, this information could not bring any benefit to the Soviet command. After all, just at that time, in Army Group South, on the orders of Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, Koch's namesake, tank models were brought to the Mius River in order to give the enemy a false impression: their general offensive would be in the Donbass.

I also note that, judging by Kuznetsov's report, Koch did indeed tell Siebert that it's not bad for the Germans if the Poles and Ukrainians shoot at each other, but he did not utter ominous tirades about the destruction of the entire indigenous population of Ukraine. After all, the Nazi elite concealed even the genocide against the Jews from their people: it was believed that the unfortunate were resettled far to the East ... Even a trusted member of the party would never have been told by the Gauleiter about the intention to exterminate all the Slavs in the Reichskommissariat entrusted to him, and here in front of him is a complete stranger, let the "compatriot" and the soldier.

The legend about valuable information on the upcoming German offensive on the Kursk Bulge, allegedly received by Kuznetsov during an audience with Koch, hides embarrassment and bitterness from the failed assassination attempt on the Reichskommissar. Even a grenade would not have helped Kuznetsov: he still had to reach out and pull out the pin. Moreover, he learned from his own experience that

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special Service 06

a heavy grenade does not give a full guarantee of success. When he approached Koch's deputy, Paul DZargel, an anti-tank grenade with an additional steel case with notches hit the edge of the sidewalk - it ruptured in the opposite direction from Dargel, and he escaped with a slight concussion.

It so happened that, being five meters from Koch and talking with him for forty minutes, Kuznetsov had absolutely no opportunity to shoot. The security of the Gauleiter, the Reichskommissar, was organized psychologically precisely and reliably.

Let me remind you that even in the Soviet nomenclature, the Reichskommissar corresponded to the first secretary of the regional committee or, at best, the republican party organization. The German intelligence services simply would not waste time and effort on an official of this level. But Hitler and Stalin were guarded incommensurably more thoroughly. True, the partisans managed to destroy another Reichskommissar, the Belarusian, Wilhelm von Kube, but only due to the fact that the maid, who was Kube's mistress and a Soviet agent, planted a bomb in the victim's bed. And the only attempt on Hitler, which had a real chance of success, was carried out on July 20, 1944, again by persons from the Fuhrer's inner circle, who usually attended his meetings. Neither the Soviet nor the German intelligence had a chance to infiltrate their people into the "inner circle" of Hitler and Stalin. Both dictators were not greedy for women. Hitler had one constant mistress - Eva Braun. After the suicide of Nadezhda Alliluyeva, Stalin, it seems, did not even have a mistress.

It must be said that the assassination of Kube brought some benefit to the Soviet side. The Reichskommissar collaborated with the Belarusian nationalists, allowed them to freely conduct cultural activities, publish newspapers and even participate in local self-government. The repression that followed the assassination of Kube contributed to the development of guerrilla warfare. True, even under his successor, the attitude of the German administration towards the Belarusian nationalists did not change. But Koch, on the contrary, suppressed the Ukrainian national movement in every possible way and thereby, in fact, played into the hands of the Soviets. Its elimination could lead to the liberalization of the occupation policy in Ukraine and thus only complicate the situation of partisan detachments.

In the book of D. N. Medvedev there are many other fictions. For example, the story of Major Martin von Gitel (sometimes his surname is pronounced as "Gettel"), who "guessed" Lieutenant Siebert ... as an Intelligence Service agent and tried to offer his services to the British. When he finally realized who was really in front of him, and grabbed his pistol, the partisans twisted his hands, interrogated him, and then finished him off.

Dmitry Nikolaevich tells about these amazing events in the following way:

"... The working day in the Reichskommissariat ended, and Valya (Dovgerf. - B.S.) was about to leave when Major Gitel approached her, whom she had recently found more and more often in the working room of the expedition.

- Wouldn't the fraulein let her see her off? asked Gitel, leaning close to her shoulder and breathing in fumes.

"Do me a favor, Major," said Valya, moving away...

None of Valya's colleagues really knew what Major Gitel was doing in the Reichskommissariat. His office on the second floor was usually closed, the major himself was found first in one place, then in another. How

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@U

as if his activity consisted in walking along the corridors.

Somehow, having lingered on her expedition after the allotted time and going to the exit, Valya looked into the ajar door and saw Gitel doing a strange thing: he was rummaging through the drawers of someone else's table. Even then, Valya understood what this red-haired dandy was doing in the Reichskommissariat and where he actually worked (in fact, Gitel did the same thing that Kuznetsov did before becoming Lieutenant Siebert. - B.S.).

- Is Fraulein married? - Gitel asked and, not allowing her to answer, he continued:
- Oh, I know, the fraulein has a fiancé.

- Quite right, - said Valya. - He is an officer, has a high concept of honor and would hardly be particularly pleased with you and me, seeing us together.

She thought that perhaps this would ward off the annoying major. But that, apparently, was the least interested today in success with women. After a few phrases, Valya realized what she owed this conversation with Gitel to.

"Where does he serve, your fiancé?" the major asked, continuing to wave his stick. Valya drew attention to how this stick was decorated: a silver inlay in the form of a skull with a snake...

- He's a veteran.

- Don't veterans serve at the front? Gitel raised his eyebrows.

- He's in charge of supplying the army.

- And how often does he visit Rovno?

- Often ... As required by the case.

"I asked because I happened to see you together in the waiting room of the Reichskommissar," Gitel said. - Since then, you and your fiancé... sorry, I forgot his name...

- Lieutenant Paul Siebert.

—... You and your fiancé inspired me with the most sincere sympathy. Would you do me the honor of introducing me to Lieutenant Siebert?

"Please," answered Valya.

And the Soviet intelligence officer readily fulfilled the request of the importunate major, but in a very special way. A few days later, Lydia Lisovskaya and Maria Mikota, both agents of Siebert and the SD, threw a party and invited Gitel to take part in it. What happened next? Let us again give the floor to Medvedev:

"...Among other guests, Paul Siebert was named.

- Siebert? Gitel repeated. - This is interesting. I will come with pleasure.

- Will you come for this Siebert? - Maya said offensively (in the book "Strong in Spirit" Maria Mikota appears under the name Maya Mikatova. - B.S.). - I don't understand why he deserved your attention? Ordinary Prussian. I would not have invited him, but he met his cousin (Lydia Lisovskaya. - B.S.) and asked for it.

- I am inclined to think that this is not an "ordinary Prussian", - Gitel grinned mysteriously, - but a real English spy.

- What are you, Major! - Maya was amazed and immediately asked in a businesslike manner:
- What's the matter? Why don't you take it?

"Because no one but me suspects it," Gitel replied not without pride. - This is my find, and I ask you not to talk about it yet ... however, I don't need to teach you. And then, why take an English spy? This is not a Bolshevik. You can wait with him, see what kind of bird he is and how he can be useful ... "

Here Major Gitel absurdly combines the features

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services

a shrewd counterintelligence officer and a stuffed fool, a shtafirka, laying out very serious suspicions to his ordinary agent, besides a woman who is familiar with the suspect.

The finale of the story, which is very sad for the major, Medvedev states as follows:

"... At the party at Lydia Lisovskaya, to Gitel's surprise, there was no one but Lydia, Maya and Siebert, who was already waiting for the major and, apparently, was glad to have the opportunity to meet. (Just like Vysotsky: "Maybe we should have a drink, get to know each other, let's see who breaks down faster?" - B.S.) He was not alone, but with a batman, whom for some reason he took with him to a party (to help him get back! - B.S.).

The party didn't last long. Gitel was tied up, gagged, and carried out by the back door into the yard, where a car stood ready. The batman got behind the wheel, and the car, having passed several streets and passing the outpost, ended up on the highway, and there, after several kilometers, turned into the forest ...

There was some organic flaw in the fascist intelligence officers themselves. All of them seemed to have been calculated on the fact that in the countries where they operate, they will be met with dumb humility, that they will "work" on the conquered land. But they ended up in a country that didn't want to, couldn't be

defeated. And the arrogant, defective, narcissistic Nazi intelligence officers suffered one defeat after another.

Major Gitel, whom Kuznetsov and Strutinsky (who played the role of a chief lieutenant's batman - B.S.) brought to the detachment, was an excellent example of such a Nazi intelligence officer. Where did all the gloss of the "red-haired major" go! He crawled at his feet, burst into tears, begged for mercy. During interrogation, he told everything he knew, in particular, he told us a lot of information that was important for us about the chief judge Funk, the only deputy Koch who survived (a few weeks later Kuznetsov and Funk were sent to another world. - B.S.). Gitel himself, as it turned out, was a confidant of this executioner of Ukraine ... "

Again Gitel shows an absurd fusion of courage with cowardice and stupidity. He is not afraid, without any insurance, to go to a meeting with a person whom he suspects of working for enemy intelligence, without even notifying any of his colleagues about this. But, having fallen into the hands of the partisans, he shows a shameful cowardice and amazing slow-wittedness. He wallows at the feet of the partisans, begging for mercy, and lays out to them at once everything he knows. Meanwhile, the only chance for the major to save his life was, if not complete silence, then at least not complete frankness. If Gitel had known anything significant that was really of interest to Soviet intelligence, he would have to behave completely differently. The major would only have to make it clear to the Medvedevites that he really has important information, but he would give evidence only in Moscow - and those who reluctantly would have to send him by plane to the mainland. But Gitel, like a fool, immediately laid out everything, left nothing in reserve, and there is no need to spend gasoline on "waste material" ...

In the plot of Medvedev's book, a whole series of absurdities is striking. Since Gitel realized that the handsome chief lieutenant was not who he claims to be, it means that the major was a fairly astute counterintelligence officer. But then why didn't this smart guy come up with one elementary thought: what should an English agent do in provincial Rovno, thousands of miles from the blessed British Isles? And what could interest the Intelligence Service in the capital of the "Reich Commissariat of Ukraine"? And as a "hardened British spy" Siebert. transmitted

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services09

information from here? Through Medvedev's partisans? Only a kamikaze would dare to direct radio broadcasts from Rovno.

Apparently, understanding the inconsistency of what is told about the abduction and murder of Gitel in the book "Strong in Spirit", Kuznetsov's colleague Nikolai Vladimirovich Strutinsky (as Siebert's orderly he tied his hands and gagged the unfortunate major) in his story "Feat" gave a slightly different version of events :

"... Kuznetsov announced a new task for the command of the detachment:

- Before we deal with General Ilgen (commander of the Eastern Forces - the collaborationist formations of the Wehrmacht; his intelligence officer captured on the same day as the murder of Funk. - B.S.), we must remove the dangerous fascist Gitel. Tomorrow I have a date with him, and it is very convenient. From Lisovskaya I learned what the Gestapo had said

suspicion of my belonging to foreign intelligence.

- Soviet? - my question sounded naive.

- If! Just... English!

We all laughed together. Nikolai Ivanovich continued:

- Funny, of course! But, as they say, there is no smoke without fire. Once he started a conversation on this topic with Lisovskaya, then, undoubtedly, he was preceded by a similar one - in another place. I would just like to know who started the provocative rumor? If only Gitel talks about it, I care less. Maybe just jealousy? Set out to compromise me in front of a beautiful woman?... But we, I hope, will get ahead of events and save the excessively curious Gitel from his burdensome worries.

Nikolai Ivanovich was introduced to Gitel by Lisovskaya. The German introduced himself as the head of the economic department of the Reichskommissariat, and Kuznetsov - as a Wehrmacht officer Paul Siebert. A fascist appeared before Siebert with a flattened head and a rounded face (a deadly definition of a fascist! - B.S.). A mustache ran like a string along the thin upper lip. Gitel liked to brag about his adventures. Especially tragic was his story about the fearless battle with the Russians and his

captivity.

- Unfortunate! - Lydia Ivanovna sympathized. How did you manage to get out of that hell?

- Love for Fatherland, my dear.

In reality, everything happened differently. Gitel cowardly surrendered and immediately announced his membership in the Communist Party of Germany. He also launched such a version that, on the instructions of the center, he entered into the confidence of Erich Koch's close associates and more than once informed the underground about the actions being prepared by the Nazis against the civilian population. He escaped from captivity. By the grace of Erich Koch, Gitel became the head of the department at the Reichskommissariat of Ukraine ...

As soon as Kuznetsov left, Gitel changed his tone and spoke unflatteringly about the swaggering and arrogant officer. He did not hesitate to repeat the version of the suspicious personality of Siebert. He has been on a business trip to Rovno for too long! Lidia Ivanovna laughed:

- In this case, you are guided by a feeling of envy, ordinary male envy!

- No, no, my dear. I am guided only by soldier's duty.

— And why is it suddenly, from the first meeting to suspect him of a spy?

- My dear, not from the first ...

Now Gitel understood how stupidly he had blabbed, and incredulously

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@9

looked at Lisovskaya. He filled his glass and drank the rum in one gulp. - I want to believe, my dear, no one will know about my revelation! No hoo! - God have mercy! Save me from suspicion, I am far from such actions! - And even yours... - Especially Paul Siebert!

"... - The time was late, Gitel got ready, but asked permission to come to me. That, perhaps, is all, except for his nasty sentimentality, Lisovskaya concluded.

Ivanovich my opinion: Gitel is dangerous for all of us. So... In general, think together.

And Kuznetsov, according to Strutinsky, decided to follow the advice of his agent, Lisovskaya. They decided to take Gitel at the apartment of another agent - the Dutchman Hubert Glyaz, an employee of the Reichskommissariat. Nikolai Ivanovich concluded: "Perhaps the most suitable address. When meeting with me, the Dutchman said: if you need a person for risk, remember me. That's what I remembered."

Strutinsky immediately somewhat contradicts himself, assuring that at first Gitel was going to be taken to the apartment of the Stukalo spouses, but strangers unexpectedly turned up at their house, and they had to switch to Glyaz's apartment as a fallback.

The next day, Lieutenant Siebert dropped in on Lisovskaya and found Gitel there. He suggested that the major from Lisovskaya go together "to the girls." Gitel was inspired: "You, Siebert, are a magician! Following the extraordinary rum, you offer beauties! How can you refuse? Of course we're going!"

Strutinsky further recalls:

"We drove up to the house of Hubert Glaz. Siebert and Gitel entered the apartment, I followed them with bottles of rum and cognac.

- Where are the girls? Gitel wondered.

- Do not hurry, my friend, they are still busy with the toilet, they will soon appear in all their dazzling splendor. Wine! Siebert ordered.

I served excellent French wine after wiping the bottle with a damp towel. Two crystal glasses sparkled beautifully. Gitel took the bottle, raised his eyebrows and winked in satisfaction.

- Very good!

After the second glass, I approached Siebert and carefully offered to get rid of the belts: "After all, they are tight!" Nikolai Ivanovich took off his belt along with his holster and sighed with relief. There was a spare walter in the trouser pocket.

- Allow me? I politely turned to Gitel. The German, though with some enthusiasm, also took off his belts from his holster. I hung them on a hanger in front of the guests...

I sat down at the table with the others. This circumstance angered Gitel. How so! Ordinary soldier, but behaves like an equal! At the moment when I was answering Gitel's questions, agitated by my tactless behavior, Kuznetsov went behind him, blinked at me, and leaned heavily on the Gestapo man. I immediately rushed to help, twisted the hands of the fascist behind his back. Hubert Glaz also arrived. He stuck a gag in the wheezing Gitel's mouth. The fascist understood his hopeless situation and shook his head with eyes bulging from fear, confirming his readiness to accept all conditions, if only to save his life.

Now Kuznetsov began a "heartfelt" conversation with the major:

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the special services F@5.

Listen, Gitel. Tell the truth, what do you know about the German officer who was suspected of collaborating with foreign intelligence?

Gitel was shocked silent.

"If you don't want to talk, I don't insist," Chief Lieutenant Siebert continued affectionately. - Then you will die without repentance.

"No, no!" the Major yelled in desperation, appealing to a sense of racial solidarity. - You are a German and you will not commit a crime against a German!

- Speak! - generously allowed Kuznetsov.

- About you, Lieutenant, I know only one thing: you very often come to Rovno and it is not known where. This interested me, because if you had been at the front longer, I would have felt freer in ... the company of Lidia Ivanovna ...

Who did you tell about your suspicions? Kuznetsov asked.

- Only... Only Lidia Ivanovna. I wanted to deal with you myself. But, as a vidige, he did not fulfill his intentions.

At the end of Strutinsky's, opponents say pathetically:

"- They will avenge me!" Kuznetsov remarked:

- Late. We carry out the verdict of the people!" Gitel was shot, the body was stuffed into a canvas bag and buried in the garden in the morning.

Strutinsky's version differs from Medvedev's in that the main motive for Gitel's actions is not the desire to get in touch with British intelligence through its agent Siebert, but jealousy towards this Siebert. But in this case, the actions of the major look ridiculous. If he was wary of the chief lieutenant as a rival and, moreover, suspected him of espionage, then why did he accept Siebert's invitation to go to an unfamiliar place, and even alone, so lightly, even with enthusiasm? And Gitel could get rid of his opponent very easily and safely: report his suspicions to his superiors, they would ask Berlin, and it would soon become clear that Paul Siebert was not among the Wehrmacht personnel. He - a bullet in the dungeon SD, and Gitel - a medal or even an Iron Cross for vigilance!

How bad! So no, the major, although he was, according to Strutinsky, from the timid, suddenly wanted risky adventures - and paid with his head.

Strutinsky also ascribes double-dealing to Gitel in Soviet captivity, in order to once again show the vile nature of the major and convince us: it would be a sin not to put this fascist to waste. But, unlike Medvedev, he does not say anything about Gitel's connection with Judge Funk, since he calls the major the head of the economic department of the Reichskommissariat. Meanwhile, I think Medvedev is not fantasizing here. It was precisely in the closeness of Gitel to Funk that the whole point was. Probably, the major was well aware of the habits and daily routine of the judge, his apartments, and the partisans who were preparing an attempt on the judge needed it just as a "language". Having received the necessary information, Kuznetsov and Strutinsky finished off Gitel. It is unlikely that the major had anything to do with counterintelligence, and most likely he was not in Soviet captivity. Well, how, tell me, did he manage to get from the camp of German prisoners of war near Krasnogorsk to Rovno?

Probably, for the same purpose as Gitel, during the abduction of General Ilgen, Kuznetsov and his comrades took with them the personal driver of the Reichskommissar Paul Granau. Apparently, they expected to get from him detailed information about the routes of travel and the daily routine of the chief. Then the driver Koch suffered the same fate as Gitel. Graunau was shot along with Ilgen, and the corpses were buried on a farm between the villages of Novy Dvor and Cheskoe Kvasilovo.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ "?

As for the mysterious Major von Ortel, his story seems absolutely fantastic. According to Medvedev's memoirs, the situation was as follows:

"If one trait in the character of von Ortel - his exorbitant vanity - Kuznetsov caught from the very beginning of their acquaintance and, having caught it, began to skillfully play on this string, now another trait has opened up to him, more important, explaining the whole background of Ortel, with all the seeming contradictions. This trait in Ortel's character was cynicism...

Siebert remained true to his habit of not asking anything. And his interlocutor appreciated this modesty in him.

"Listen, Paul," he suggested suddenly, "what if you come with me? Oh, that's an idea! I swear to God, we will not be bored there!

"I'm a bad intelligence officer," Kuznetsov said evasively (according to the rules of the genre, an excellent Soviet intelligence officer pretends to be incompetent in this matter in order to make readers smile; hence the purely literary origin of Siebert's dialogue with Ortel. - B.S.).

- Ha! I'll make good of you!

- But for this you need to have some data, abilities ...

- You have them. You love to live well, you love the pleasures of our short life. What do you say if the Fuhrer makes you rich? A? Can you imagine - he will give you, say, Volyn or, even better, lands and

gardens somewhere in the Mediterranean. He will shower you with all the gifts! What would you say to that?

- I would ask: what should I do for this?

- A little. Very little. Risk your life. - Only that?! Kuznetsov laughed. - You're joking, Ortel. I am not one of cowards, I risked my life more than once, but I did not receive anything for it, except for ribbons on my chest.

- The question is about where and how to take risks. Today the Fuhrer needs our help... Yes, Paul, today is the time when you need to help the Fuhrer, without forgetting, of course, yourself...

Paul listened silently.

And then von Ortel told him where he was going to direct his steps. He goes to the most decisive sector of the front. Here Paul Siebert first asked the question:

- Where is he, this decisive site? Is it not in Moscow? Or, perhaps, it is necessary to parachute to Tyumen? Damn it, I don't care where he is!

- For this they will give you, Siebert, an extra Iron cross. No, my dear lieutenant, the decisive sector is not where you think, and you don't need to go down there by parachute, but arrive comfortably, in a good car and, especially remember, you need to be able to wear civilian clothes.

- I don't understand. You make riddles, Ortel! - Irony sounded in Kuznetsov's voice. "Where, then, is this "decisive site" of yours?"

"In Tehran," von Ortel said with a smile.

- In Tehran? But this is Iran, a neutral state!

- So this is where the Big Three will meet in November: Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill...

And von Ortel said that he had recently traveled to Berlin, had been received by General Müller, and received a very tempting offer, the meaning of which Siebert probably guessed. However, he can tell him directly: the liquidation of the "Big Three" is supposed. Prepare special people. If Siebert wishes, he, von Ortel, will intercede for him. The school is in Copenhagen. Specially prepared

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Special Forces@3

terrorists for Tehran. Of course, we shouldn't talk about it.

- Now you finally understand how generously the Fuhrer will reward us?

"I understand," Siebert nodded. "But are you sure I can get a job?"

- What a question?! You find out first who is assigned one of the main roles in the entire operation.

Siebert was silent.

- To me! von Ortel exclaimed and laughed, himself pleased with the surprise of the confession. He was already pretty drunk..."

Just after this conversation, Kuznetsov twisted the ill-fated Gitel and arrived at the detachment. There he declared his intention to finish off von Ortel:

- I barely restrained myself and did not kill him there - in the casino.

- And they did a great job of restraining themselves, - his immediate supervisor reassured the agitated intelligence officer. - In general, we need to think about whether it is necessary to kill Ortel?

"Comrade commander," Nikolai Ivanovich said in a voice trembling with excitement, "this Gestapo geek wants to encroach on the life of our leader!" How can you hold me?!

- You just said, - exhorted the raging Pooh Medvedev, - that Ortel leads a whole group of terrorists destined for Tehran. Do you know this group? No. Here, in Rovno, you can only kill Ortel, and those whom we do not know and will not know will go to Tehran. Ortel should not be killed, but stolen from the city alive. Here we will try to find out from him what kind of thugs are preparing for a trip to Tehran, their signs, perhaps, and addresses in Tehran ... Sit down and write down for now the detailed signs of Ortel himself. Everything that you said, and these signs, we will report to Moscow today.

Kuznetsov, having finished the verbal portrait of Ortel, said indignantly:

"This hardened spy tried to work in Moscow even before the war!"... He says that he walked as if on hot sand. They, deprived of duty, homeland, honor, do not understand that in the Soviet Union all the people are scouts!

And further in the book "Strong in Spirit" there is a pathetic tirade: "All the people are scouts! ... Take Kuznetsov himself. An ordinary engineer, a purely civilian person, never thought of becoming an intelligence officer, but meanwhile, in a duel with him, with a peaceful person, a major German professional intelligence officer who had gone through more than one school was defeated ... "

Either Medvedev really didn't know Kuznetsov's true biography, or he didn't have the right to tell the truth. But we know that Kuznetsov was a forester, not an engineer, and his connection with the state security agencies before the appearance of Lieutenant Paul Siebert in Rovno lasted for ten years. Kuznetsov cannot be called a "peaceful man" in any way, although he did not have

military rank.

And the story with Ortel, according to Medvedev, ended in nothing:

"... Kuznetsov accidentally met Max Yaskovets (German officer, friend of Ortel. - B.S.). He told him that there was a rumor that von Ortel had shot himself...

Von Ortel's suicide seemed suspicious to Kuznetsov. He did not want to believe it, also because the death of this reptile completely upset the plan outlined by the detachment command ... After receiving

assignment about the kidnapping of von Ortel, Nikolai Ivanovich did not see him. But that he was in Rovno, Kuznetsov knew from Valya: she

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The Secret Struggle of Special Services@.

met him. And Kuznetsov hoped that not today, tomorrow he would complete the task.

"No one knows about the upcoming meeting of the Big Three in Tehran," he thought now. - It is possible that this is generally a fantasy that this Gestapo man came up with in order to get an extra hundred marks from me. What if this Tehran meeting will take place? How now to find out which of the terrorists will go there?

Kuznetsov hurried to Lydia Lisovskaya, a double agent; working for Medvedev's partisans, she pretended to be recruited by Gitel and Ortel and fooled them. In Lisovskaya, his doubts about the major's suicide were confirmed: "Three days ago Ortel was with me. Went to say goodbye. He was going to fly somewhere from Rovno. He asked me not to tell anyone about my departure, and if, he says, they say that I am gone, that something has happened to me, then do not refute it. He promised to bring a good gift. When I heard about the suicide, it seemed to me that something was wrong. Ortel left, and the rumor that he had committed suicide was spread by the Gestapo."

According to Medvedev, the frustrated Kuznetsov sent a letter to the detachment, where he reproached himself for not having time to capture Ortel and giving him the opportunity to sneak out of Rovno.

But why was Lieutenant Siebert unable to capture Major Ortel? It seems to me that the answer here is very simple: this major did not exist in nature. And the whole story with the impending attempt on the "Big Three" in Rovno was a prudent fantasy of Dmitry Nikolayevich Medvedev. By the way, von Ortel calls Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin the "Big Three", and this name was in use only in the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, and by no means in Germany.

This invention had its continuation. Rumors circulated in Soviet journalism that the famous adventurer, Mussolini's kidnapper, Otto Skorzeny, was involved in the failed assassination attempt in Tehran. And they crawled after the famous master of special operations seemed to confirm this himself in an interview with the Parisian magazine Express in 1964:

"Of all the funny stories that are told about me, the most funny are those written by historians. They claim that I was supposed to kidnap Roosevelt with my team during the Yalta Conference. This is stupidity: Hitler never ordered me to do this. Now I'll tell you the truth about this story: in fact, Hitler ordered me to kidnap Roosevelt during the previous conference - the one that took place in Tehran ... But bam! (Laughs.) Due to various reasons, this case could not be done with sufficient success ... "

Failing to catch the cheerful mockery of the credulity of historians and journalists, the obvious hoax in Skorzeny's answer, Pavel Anatolyevich Sudoplatov, without a shadow of doubt and embarrassment, wrote in his memoirs:

"The partisan formation under the command of Colonel Medvedev was the first to get in touch with Otto Skorzeny ... Medvedev and Kuznetsov established that German sabotage groups were training their people in the foothills of the Carpathians in order to prepare and attack the American and Soviet embassies in Tehran, where in 1943 The first conference of the "Big Three" was to take place. A group of militants Skorzeny was trained near Vinnitsa, where Medvedev's partisan detachment was operating. It was here, on the territory occupied by the Nazis, that Hitler placed a branch of his Headquarters. Our

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Secret Fight@5

a young employee Nikolai Kuznetsov (only four years younger than Sudoplatov himself. - B.S.), under the guise of a senior lieutenant of the Wehrmacht, established friendly relations with an officer of the German intelligence service Oster, who was just busy looking for people with experience in fighting Russian partisans. He needed these people for an operation against the Soviet high command. Having owed Kuznetsov, Oster offered to pay him off with Iranian carpets, which he was going to bring to Vinnitsa from a business trip to Tehran. This message, immediately transmitted to Moscow, coincided with information from other sources and helped us prevent actions in Tehran against the Big Three.

Because Sudoplatov replaced Ortel with Oster, Medvedev's, or rather now Sudoplatov-Medvedev's, version did not become more convincing. There are too many absurdities that are conspicuous in it. Well, why would terrorists destined for Tehran train in the foothills of the Carpathians, where detachments of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the Polish Home Army and less numerous, but much better trained and armed Soviet partisan detachments like Medvedev's, operated? Why not send Skorzeny's men to the much safer Bavarian Alps? And why was the camp for the preparation of the assassination attempt in Tehran equipped in Copenhagen? Are the relief and climate in Denmark and Iran very similar? And what was Ortel to do in Rivne, still remote from the Carpathians and flooded with Soviet agents? Yes, and Skorzeny, that's the trouble, in his post-war memoirs he did not say a word about his plans for the "Big Three" in Tehran or anywhere else. But this would only add sensationalism to his memories! But Skorzeny reports exactly where he was in late November and early December 1943, during the Tehran Conference. It turns out that the Fuhrer's favorite was in Paris at that time, so that, in case of emergency, with the help of his people, to stop the attempt of the Vichy government to take refuge in North Africa occupied by the Western allies. The order received by Skorzeny read:

"Surround the city of Vichy with a cordon of German troops, observing all precautions and as inconspicuously as possible. Military forces must be deployed in such a way that, at the first signal from Headquarters, all exits from the city are immediately blocked and any attempt to escape, on foot or by car, is prevented. In addition, a battle group of sufficient strength should be placed in reserve in order to block the exits at the second signal and, if necessary, capture the building of the French government proper. The troops that will take part in this operation must be subordinate to Major Skorzeny ... "

Agree that this is not at all like preparing an attack on the Soviet and American embassies in Tehran, and Skorzeny is not omnipresent, like the DEVIL.

The behavior of Siebert in a conversation with von Ortel looks completely strange. As we remember, even in the case of Kuznetsov himself, in the past an old, trusted informant, before inviting him to work in Moscow, his personal file was studied there for several months. And Ortel, on the fly, is wooing Siebert for a much more delicate mission than "lining" Moscow ballerinas to German diplomats. Wouldn't the major have asked Berlin first about the gifted, promising Lieutenant Paul Siebert? Then, very soon, the answer would have followed that such an officer was not listed in the Wehrmacht, and Kuznetsov would have been

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special Service" @56

captured. His next meeting with the major would certainly have taken place in the SD dungeon. Yes, if Ortel really started such a conversation with Siebert about Tehran, he would only alert the smart intelligence officer Kuznetsov: are they going to arrest him right there, in the casino?

And why, according to Ortel, should the chief of the Gestapo, Heinrich Muller, suddenly organize the assassination attempt on Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill? Is it because Medvedev, following the Soviet tradition, called all members of the German security service the SD Gestapo? But Walter Schellenberg, chief of the 6th Directorate of the Imperial Main Security Directorate, who was engaged in intelligence and other special operations behind enemy lines, says absolutely nothing in his memoirs about the preparation of the assassination attempt in Tehran in November-December 1943.

I think that Sudoplatov's fantasy was also fed by the Pravda report cited above about the allegedly impending assassination attempt on the Big Three. In practice, the German secret services could hardly carry out such an attempt at that time. Franz Mayer's network in Iran still existed, but was under the tight cap of Soviet and British counterintelligence. It remains a mystery how German terrorists could be transferred from the Reich to Tehran. Landing from the sea was ruled out: the submarine would have to sail around the Cape of Good Hope, and there were simply no ships capable of such a long autonomous transition in Germany, and in the whole world then. And how, I wonder, would Skorzeny manage to get Roosevelt out of Iran when he magically managed to kidnap him?

Most importantly, there was no point in eliminating the entire "Big Three" or any of these three for Hitler. At the end of 1943, the Germans in the war were betting only on gaining time. They hoped not so much for a ghostly miracle weapon, but for a split in the anti-Hitler coalition, and the unprecedented terrorist attack in Tehran could only damage this goal. The death of one of the leaders would force his successor to fight the war to a victorious end, completely regardless of the attitude towards Hitler and the coalition partners. British and American public opinion simply would not have allowed Anthony Eden and Harry Truman to act otherwise. In the USSR, of course, public opinion did not play any significant role. But even here nothing indicated that the hypothetical

Stalin's successors, say, Molotov, Malenkov or Zhdanov, can not make a separate peace with Germany, when there is very little left before complete victory. In addition, Schellenberg writes that it was only in the autumn of 1944 that Hitler was ready to sanction an assassination attempt on Stalin, although this evidence, as we will see later, raises some doubts.

How did intelligence officer Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov die? Unfortunately, this is still shrouded in a fog of uncertainty.

When the Soviet troops approached Rovno, Kuznetsov - promoted to captain Siebert - was sent to Lvov by the command of the partisan detachment. There he shot the vice-governor of the district of Galicia, Otto Bauer, and the chief of the office of the presidium of the government of the district, Dr. Heinrich Schneider. But then luck changed him. At the exit from Lvov, near the village of Kurovitsy, on February 12, a car in which Captain Siebert and two more Soviet intelligence officers in the form of German soldiers, Yan Kaminsky and Ivan Belov, were driving, was stopped by a Feljandarmerie patrol. By that time, Paul Siebert's documents had already been exposed during the assassination of Luftwaffe Lieutenant Colonel Hans Peters in Lvov. He managed to name before his death

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ U

the name of the captain from whom he tried to check the documents. Major Kanter, senior patrol, demanded Kuznetsov's permission to leave the city. Paul Siebert, of course, did not have such permission. Previously, all the necessary documents were easily prepared in Medvedev's detachment. But now the "Winners" were far away, and they had to rely only on themselves. Kuznetsov thought for a moment. Seeing that one of the gendarmes raised the barrier, letting the oncoming truck pass, he grabbed the "Walter" and mortally wounded Kanter with two shots at close range. The driver Belov immediately gave gas and managed to break through the lowering barrier. The gendarmes opened fire after the car and pierced the rear slopes. About eight hundred meters from the post, the car fell into a ditch. Kuznetsov and his comrades hid in the forest. Now they had to make their way to the front line, carefully avoiding encounters with both German patrols and detachments of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. The latter could destroy them both as Germans and as Soviet intelligence officers.

Siebert and his companions were once again fatally unlucky at the very goal.

D. N. Medvedev for the first time made public in his book the following document:

"From the Chief of the Security Police

and SS in the Galician district

14 N - 90/44. Secret.

State importance.

Gor. Lvov. 2. TU. 44

Treat it as a secret

state importance.

telegram lightning

To the General Directorate of Imperial Security

for presentation to the SS Gruppenfuehrer

police lieutenant general Muller personally.

Berlin.

At one of the meetings, 1. [M 44] the Ukrainian delegate reported that one unit of Ukrainian nationalists 2. Sh. 44 had detained three Soviet agents in the forest near Belgorodka in the area of Verba (Volyn). Those arrested had fake German documents, maps, German, Ukrainian and Polish newspapers, among them the Lvovska Newspaper with an obituary about Dr. Bauer and Dr. Schneider, as well as a report from one of the detainees about his work. This agent (according to German documents his name is Paul Siebert) was identified by a representative of the UPA. We are talking about a Soviet partisan - intelligence officer and saboteur, who for a long time carried out his actions with impunity in Rovno, killing, in particular, Dr. Funk and kidnapping, in particular, General Ilgen. In Lvov, Siebert intended to shoot the governor Dr. Vechter. He did not succeed. Instead of the governor, Lieutenant Governor Dr. Bauer and his presidial chief (chief of the government office. - B S.) Dr. Schneider were killed. Both of these German statesmen were shot near their private apartments. Siebert's report describes the act of murder down to the smallest detail.

In Lvov, Siebert shot not only Bauer and Schneider, but also a number of other persons, among them Major Kanter of the field gendarmerie, whom we carefully searched for.

1

1 More correctly - the Imperial Main Directorate of Security. - Approx. author.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@8

The details contained in the report about the places and times of the acts committed, about the injuries of the victims, about the captured ammunition, etc. seem to be accurate. From the Pritzman battle group (another

transcription of this surname: Pruttsman. - B.S.), a message was received that Paul Siebert and both of his accomplices were shot in Volyn by nationalist Bandera.

The OUN representative confirmed this fact and promised that all materials would be handed over to the security police.

Chief of the Security Police and SS

in the Galician region

Obersturmbannführer SS

and Senior Management Advisor

Dr. Vitiska

[signature]".

This document, found in the premises of the SD and the security police in Lvov in October 1944, testified that Kuznetsov was dead. November 5, 1944 he was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. Yan Stanislavovich Kaminsky and Ivan Vasilyevich Belov were awarded the Order of the Patriotic War [degree. Since the bodies of the scouts were not found, the word "posthumously" was not put down in the decree. Perhaps they were hoping for a miracle?

A more complete text of the lightning telegram dated April 2, 1944, number 14 H-90/44, was given only in 1998 in the book by Teodor Gladkov "From the scene of the assassination attempt ...". Here are the main points of this document, omitted in Medvedev's book:

"Regarding: the wife of the Bandera activist Lebed, who is currently imprisoned in the Ravensbrück concentration camp ...

Some time ago, secretly, information reached me about the desire of the OUN-Bandera group, as a result of an exchange of opinions, to determine the possibilities of cooperation against the Bolsheviks. At first, I refused any negotiations on the grounds that an exchange of opinions on a political basis in advance was pointless. Later I declared that I was ready to listen to the wishes of the OUN-Bandera group. On March 5, 1944, my referent-informant met with a Ukrainian who was allegedly authorized by the central leadership of the OUN-Bandera to negotiate with the security police on behalf of the political and military sector of the organization and on behalf of the territorial organizations of all regions where Ukrainians live or can live.

In the future, the informant-informant conducted negotiations mainly in order to obtain information of interest to the security police about the Polish resistance movement and about the situation on the Soviet side of the front, as well as in the Soviet rear, promising in return to consider the possibility of releasing the arrested Bandera.

At one meeting 1.1\U. In 1944, a Ukrainian delegate reported that one unit of the UPA 2. Sh. 44 detained three Soviet-Russian spies in the forest near Belgorodka in the Verba (Volyn) region. Judging by the documents of these three detained agents, we are talking about a group reporting directly to F., General of the NKVD State Security Service.

The UPA verified the identity of the three arrested as follows:

1. The leader of the group, nicknamed Pooh, had false documents of a senior lieutenant of the German army, he was allegedly born in Koenigsberg (there was a photograph of Pooh on the certificate. He was in the form of a German

lieutenant).

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@9

2. Pole Jan Kaminsky.

3. Shooter Ivan Vlasovets (nicknamed Belov), driver Pooh (here Vitiska obviously got it wrong: the real name of the driver was Belov, and he was listed as Vlasovets only according to fake documents of the Russian "voluntary assistant" of the Wehrmacht. - B.S.).

All arrested Soviet-Russian agents had fake German documents, rich material - maps, German and Polish newspapers, among them the Lvovska Newspaper and a report on their intelligence activities.

Judging by this report, compiled personally by Pooh, the following terrorist acts were committed by him and both of his accomplices in the Lvov region.

After completing the assignment in Rivne, Pooh went to Lvov and got an apartment from a Pole, then Pooh managed to get into the meeting, where there was a meeting of the highest representatives of the Galician authorities under the leadership of the governor, doctor Vechter. Pooh intended to shoot Dr. Waechter. Due to strict preventive measures by the security police, this plan could not be carried out, and instead of the governor, Lieutenant Governor Dr. Bauer and his secretary Dr. Schneider were killed ...

After the commission of the act, Pooh and his accomplices hid in the area of Zlochev, Lutsk and Kivertsia, where they found refuge with hiding Jews, from whom they received maps and newspapers. Among them is the Lvovska Newspaper, where the obituaries of Dr. Bauer and Dr. Schneider were placed...

The Soviet-Russian agent Pooh, detained by the UPA unit, is undoubtedly the Soviet-Russian terrorist Paul Siebert, who kidnapped General Ilgen in Rovno, and in the Galicia district shot Lieutenant Colonel Peters, one senior aviation corporal, Dr. Bauer and Dr. Schneider, as well as a field major Kanter gendarmerie, whom we carefully searched for...

A message was received from the Prützmann combat group that Paul Siebert and both of his accomplices were shot in Volyn ...

The representative of the UPA promised that all materials in copies, photocopies or originals, as well as paratroopers who were still alive, would be handed over to the security police (we are talking about several Soviet agents captured by the UPA from among captured Germans. With a letter from the chairman of the collaborationist Union of German officers, General Walter von Seidlitz-Kuribach Commander of Army Group South, Field Marshal Erich von Manstein. - B.S.), if instead the security police agree to release Mrs. Lebed with the child and relatives.

Since the acquisition of the richest materials of Agent Pooh, i.e., Paul Siebert, and the materials of General Seydlitz and his agents is of exceptional importance for the security of the state, I consider it necessary to release Madame Lebed and her relatives. In addition, apparently, they do not pose a great threat to the German

interests in Galicia. Based on this, I ask you to urgently consider the issue and before 11 o'clock on Tuesday 4. TU. 44 with a lightning telegram to inform me whether the release of Mrs. Lebed will be promised, because on this day my informant will meet with a delegate of the OUN-Bandera group. If the answer is negative, there is a danger that this valuable material will be transferred not to us, but to the Wehrmacht.

The representative of the OUN... again confirmed that the Bandera group, in view of the threat of the destruction of the Ukrainian people by the Soviets, recognizes that only an alliance with Germany can guarantee the existence of Ukrainians...

Based on the foregoing, I request the release of the family

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special Service*@9

Swan, which will certainly pay off and can help resolve the Ukrainian issue in our interests. It is to be expected that if the release promise is kept, then the OUN-Bandera group will send us much more information."

This telegram was preceded by a report dated March 29 to the chief of police Vitiska from the Commissar of the Criminal Police of SS Hauptsturmführer Pappe about the meeting of the representative of the UPA Gerasimovsky (Ivan Grinyokh) with the "reference-informant", which took place on the 27th:

"Gerasimovsky said that one of the UPA detachments behind the front line managed to capture 33 or 4 Bolshevik agents. They were led by a man dressed in the uniform of a chief lieutenant of the German armed forces... Gerasimenko does not know if the agents captured by the UPA detachment are still alive, but he promised to collect supporting material and provide it to the security police along with the agents, if they are still alive and their can be sent across the front line.

We do not have any more documents about the fate of Kuznetsov today. True, in 1951, MGB investigators interrogated SS Hauptsturmführer Peter Christian Krause, a former employee of the Lvov SD. He showed:

"... In March 1945, while in Slovakia, I learned about his (Siebert. - B.S.) death. This was reported by General Birkampf, according to whom Siebert was identified and killed while trying to cross the front line. Gave Siebert the diary he had with him. After his death, the diary with photographs of Siebert was handed over by the UPA command to the SS Obergruppenführer Prützmann operating in this area.

It is difficult to say how accurate Krause was in conveying the circumstances of the death of Siebert-Kuznetsov. After all, he spoke about this from other people's words and after more than six years. The Chekists did not have the opportunity to interrogate Pruttsman: after the defeat of Germany, he committed suicide. And today we do not know whether the Ukrainian rebels handed over to the SD the documents taken from Siebert-Kuznetsov. Indeed, in the lightning telegram sent by Vitiska, it was only said that Pruttsman's people had learned from the UPA command about the execution of captured Soviet agents. It is possible that Krause erroneously combined information about the report written by Siebert, received from his boss Vitiski, and Birkampf's story, citing Prützmann, about the execution of Soviet agents in Volhynia. Anyway, no trace

the report of Prützmann or Birkampf on the death of Siebert and the report of Pooh-Kuznetsov have not yet been found in the German archives. It is also unknown whether Mikola Lebed's wife, Daria Gnatkiwska, was released, and if so, whether the "Siebert papers" were transferred under the exchange condition to the Germans, which for them were already of purely historical interest, and at that time they had no time for history ... Rather In all, Kuznetsov's report was never handed over to the Germans. It is only known that the fate of some of the people whom Bandera asked to be released along with Lebed's wife was sad. Stepan Rogulya was shot already on April 17, 1944, 15 days after Vitiski's telegram asking for their release. Stepan's wife Anastasia was released on March 14, before all the events associated with the proposed exchange of papers for people, and his daughter Sophia was sent to Ravensbrück.

It is also difficult to understand on which side of the front Nikolai Kuznetsov was killed. Grinyokh, in his message, conveyed that this happened on the Soviet side and 3 or 4 agents were captured. It is possible that there were not two, but three satellites with Siebert at that time. The point is that in Hebrew

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services @ Z.

partisan detachment, where Kuznetsov, Belov and Kaminsky hid for several days, they were given a guide, Samuil Erlich, who was supposed to bring the scouts to the front valley. However, this man has gone missing. Apparently, having brought Kuznetsov and his comrades to the advanced positions of the Soviet troops, he decided to return to his near Lvov and was killed by the Germans or Bandera on the way back. But another option is also possible: Erlich remained with everyone until the very end and was shot by UPA fighters, and since he did not have any documents with him, they simply did not inform the Germans about him.

The fact that Kuznetsov and his associates could have died already in the area occupied by our troops is also evidenced by the assumption of Alexander Lukin, the former head of intelligence in the Medvedev detachment, expressed by him in a conversation with Teodor Gladkov with reference to an anonymous source: Kuznetsov stumbled upon a Bandera detachment, dressed in the uniform of the Red Army, and such a form is more appropriate for them in the territory occupied by Soviet troops. Well, there is nothing incredible in the fact that Kuznetsov fell into the hands of Ukrainian partisans already on the land liberated by the Red Army. There was no continuous front in the wooded foothills of the Carpathians, and in the gaps between the Soviet units Bandera detachments in Red Army uniforms could well operate. In the German rear, it made no sense to be in a Soviet military uniform, and there was no need to take risks in an unexpected, say, collision with Wehrmacht units.

If we assume that Kuznetsov, Kaminsky and Belov were captured by a UPA detachment dressed in Soviet military uniform, then this assumption explains the appearance of a written report by Pooh-Kuznetsov addressed to "General F." - Head of counterintelligence of the 2nd Main Directorate of the NKGB P. Fedotov. Under his leadership, Nikolai Ivanovich worked in Moscow. Suppose Kuznetsov at first mistook Bandera for his own and, at the insistence of their commander, wrote a written report to be sent to the headquarters in order to prove that he was not a Wehrmacht officer, but a Soviet intelligence officer. This paper would inevitably fall into the hands of uninitiated people, whom, moreover, Kuznetsov did not fully trust. And he signed the report with his underground nickname and did not disclose the nicknames of his comrades. Perhaps one of

of them, Ivan Belov, gave his real name, which ended up in Vitiski's telegram, but as a fictitious name. It is unlikely that the commander of a small detachment of the UPA was privy to the game of his leadership: to release the people taken by the Germans for valuable information. Leading Siebert and his companions back to the German rear across the front line was a risky business. Burdened with prisoners, the detachment could become an easy prey for some large Soviet or German unit. Therefore, the rebel commander shot Kuznetsov, Belov and Kaminsky. It seems that he had previously reported to the top that he had captured three Soviet spies, and Grinyoch, when talking to the German "informant assistant", decided that the captives were still alive.

Another option is also possible. Kuznetsov, seeking to leave a memory of his deeds in history, wrote a report in advance, knowing that he could die in a skirmish with the Germans, Bandera, or even from his own bullets when crossing the front line. This desire was stronger than the feeling of self-preservation: such a report when meeting with a German patrol could cost the lives of all three scouts and terrorists. It is possible that the Kuznetsov group died on the enemy side of the front, when the UPA fighters mistook them for the Germans and destroyed them in a short battle. The report written by the scout, found on the body of Kuznetsov, helped Bandera

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ "

understand that these are Soviet agents.

It remains a mystery why the German documents, based on data from the Ukrainian leadership, say that Siebert was a chief lieutenant. But by that time, Medvedev had already "produced" him to the Hauptmann, which was recorded in the "zoldbuch" (identity card; Some historians believe that the "zoldbukh" remained in the hands of the murdered Major Kanter, and the UPA people judged the rank by the driver's rights, in which Siebert - Kuznetsov was in the uniform of a chief lieutenant in the photo. However, it can be assumed that the scout had a "zoldbuch", but the Ukrainians did not particularly delve into the documents in German and limited themselves to viewing only a driver's license, "demoting" Siebert to chief lieutenants.

So it was or otherwise, but all the information about the time and place of the death of Kuznetsov, Kaminsky and Belov today boils down to the following. They found their death on March 2, 1944 in Volyn, near the village of Belgorodka, in the Verba area, which, most likely, was already on the Soviet side of the front. No other data can be extracted from Vitiski's telegram and Pappe's message. I doubt that Kuznetsov's grave will ever be found.

However, after the publication of Medvedev's book, Kuznetsov became a truly legendary hero, extolled by official propaganda. For such a hero, death is as heroic as life, and the grave, on which on holidays the pioneers will lay flowers.

The death and grave of Kuznetsov was invented by his colleague Nikolai Vladimirovich Strutinsky. Here is what he writes in the documentary story "Feat":

"...Where to begin? How to be guided in search of the place of death of Kuznetsov?

We visited many villages and farms in Volhynia and Rivne region, where the front line once passed, and had long conversations with local residents. But, unfortunately, they could not cling to any significant detail. Then we concentrated the search on the Lvov region ... We were especially attentive to everything related to the fighting of the partisans in the Directions to Zolochiv, Brody, in the areas of the Penyatsky and Ganachivsky forests, we found former members of the nationalist gangs operating in these forests. Additionally, we studied the well-known route of Kuznetsov from Lviv to the village of Kurovichi.

Who seeks will always find. Strutinsky continues:

"Carried away, we did not notice how an old man, about seventy-five years old, dressed simply but cleanly, came out of a hazel tree. He was wearing a coarse cloth jacket, gray trousers made of dense material, tucked into high tops of boots. On his head, despite the warm weather, he wore a pointed sheepskin hat. Passing by me and Georges (brother of N.V. Strutinsky, who also fought in the detachment of Medvedev. - B.S.), located under a tree, the old man lightly touched his headgear with his hand and greeted me dryly.

- Where, father, are you in a hurry? his brother called. The old man stopped. I brought a jersey from the car, laid it on the ground and invited the stranger to sit down. Georges poured wine into a plastic glass and handed it to the peasant. He hesitated at first, but then shook his head.

- To your health, sons! - and approvingly stretched: - Delicious thing!

We sensed that the old man wanted to strike up a conversation, but was wondering if it was worth it. As a man who had seen a lot in the world, both bad and good, he was cautious and only asked questions.

But the search engines clearly wanted to talk with the old-timer. They

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@3}

perfectly understood why the peasant was cautious. This happened in 1959. Just six years ago, the UPA stopped armed resistance. Residents of Western Ukraine well remembered both the punitive operations of the Soviet internal troops and the mass deportations to Siberia of the so-called "Bandera accomplices". Be careful here! But little by little the brothers got the old man talking. We started with family affairs, switched to hunting, fishing ... After the second pile, the peasant became more talkative. Realizing what they want from him, he scolded Ukrainian nationalists ...

- They say that Soviet partisans were here under the Germans? - asked Nikolai Strutinsky.

"I saw them," said the old man. - They did not touch us, civilians. But the Germans, policemen, various traitors were not spared. People said that just before the front, three such partisans died. Everyone was dressed in German clothes and even spoke in German.

- How did they die and where? ... - the interlocutors became worried.

- There, behind the meadow. There is such a village on the Berezina. When they were surrounded

one of them grenade bang! Himself, poor fellow, perished, but also many bandits put.

- Something, grandfather, you say doubtful! I can't believe they are grenade themselves! - provoked to frankness Georges.

The old man was offended and said goodbye:

- Young you, but early! Do not believe! To whom? Here all the peasant people believe me! And he, you see! Ugh! Thanks for the hotel. I'll go!

At that time, it was simply dangerous to say that Bandera fought not only with the Bolsheviks, but also with the Germans, especially with the recent opponents of the UPA. And you can understand the old man: he tried to tell it appropriately, but they offended him with distrust ...

And the brothers continued their search. To the south of the city of Brody - the direction was indirectly indicated by the old man - there were the villages of Guta Penyatskaya, Chernitsa and Boratin. Strutinsky testifies:

"From the stories of the inhabitants of Boratin, we learned about three "Germans" who died at the hands of the nationalists. They established that everything happened on the rural outskirts, the so-called Berezina, under the forest, in the house where Stepan Golubovich, the foreman of the local collective farm's field-growing team, still lives. We went to him. He confirmed the incident that took place in his house on the night of March 9, 1944.

"But these Germans were mysterious people," Golubovich remarked.

- How many were there? How are you dressed? What language did they speak? What signs do they have? Approximate age of each? - we bombarded Golubovich with questions.

Further, Nikolai Strutinsky preferred not to convey his dialogue with Golubovich, but to draw a purely fictional picture of how three scouts approached the hut, rejoicing at the impending cannonade:

"Our people are there!" exults Kuznetsov. "We only need to hold out for two or three days, and they will come here!

To Golubovich, however, the trinity, just in case, introduced themselves as Germans. While Kuznetsov and his companions were having dinner, a dozen Bandera men burst into the hut and twisted them. At first, the scouts were allegedly mistaken for the Germans, but then the eldest entered and identified the captured officer as Siebert. When the nationalists realized that they were facing a major Soviet agent, they decided to profitably sell him to the Germans. And before that, one of the Bandera allegedly explained to the "German" Siebert: "We only take away weapons from stray Germans. We don't kill you. Another thing - the communists! With those not

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services@\\.

Let's stand on ceremony! "- although it is completely incomprehensible how the Bandera people would have decided to let the German officer and soldier go alive if they had just killed the German soldier standing on the clock at the hut, as they thought, (in reality - Belov)? Survivors - Bandera people don't know this? - would certainly inform their own about what had happened, and the Germans in this case

the conversation is short: shoot the hostages, burn the village.

But, as already mentioned, events took a turn unfavorable for Kuznetsov and his companions:

"The leader entered in a black uniform and a high mutton hat. He narrowed his eyes ferociously. Then he opened them wide and barked at the top of his voice:

- So it's him! It's exactly him! Boys, over here!

Axes ran into the room.

The ringleader held a parabellum in his left hand, and with his right he hurriedly rummaged in the breast pocket of his jacket, pulled out a piece of paper. Glancing at her, the ataman blurted out in one breath:

- Siebert! Let the thunder kill me - Siebert! ... Swarm! To me! - without taking his eyes off the partisans, the leader called. Threatened: - You answer for him with your head! Now Skiba and Siry will come. Let them see how lucky I am! So the Germans are for him ... Ege-ge-ge!

The leader disappeared behind the door.

"Now, it seems, everything! .. - flashed through the mind of Nikolai Ivanovich. - There is only one thing left: not to be given alive ... "

Realizing that the situation was hopeless, Nikolai Ivanovich decided to sell his life at a higher price. He waited for the leaders to return. He asked for a cigarette, rolled up a cigarette, bent over to light a cigarette by a kerosene lamp. Then, according to Strutinsky, the following happened:

"Several OUN members entered the room. One of them, in a black hat, cast a wolfish glance at Kuznetsov. At the same moment Kuznetsov put out the lamp. His courageous voice sounded like a tocsin:

- Get lost, you damned ones! We will not die on our knees!

Random shots rang out. Flashes lit up the face of Nikolai Ivanovich. He stood to his full height with a grenade pressed to his chest. Yan Kaminsky sat down by the bed, and axes froze in horror under the walls. There was a deafening explosion. Yellow flames erupted. The heart-rending scream of the wounded filled the room. There was a commotion.

Yan Kaminsky jumped out through the broken window. The ataman, crouched by the wall, was tearing himself up:

- He'll see, you scoundrel! Shoot! - Fell! Aida!

Where have you all gone! - boomed the elder. - Search this one! Find a lamp, but for now shine a flashlight. My God, how the foremen scream! What did he, the bastard, do? My Jesus!

Kuznetsov was dying in the middle of the room. There were wounds on his chest and stomach. His face was covered in blood, his right hand was torn off... He was breathing heavily. The chest rose high. Less and less often... His face, calm and stern, froze forever.

And the wounded moaned around... Overcoming the pain, Chernogora asked:

Was the one that jumped out the window killed?

- On the spot. Already near the forest they banged the encore soul! Here is his field bag.

- Thoroughly search the one that stood near the hut. Anything you take, hand it over to me! If you hide anything, I'll shoot it myself!"

Before us is something from a beautiful heroic tale - nothing more. Neither

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Secret Fight@5

in time, nor in place, the circumstances of Kuznetsov's death, set out by Strutinsky, do not coincide with what we find in German documents. But it is clear why the author chose Boratin. There were no Soviet troops in this area in March 1944. This means that there was no version, unpleasant for the Soviet consciousness, that Kuznetsov died in the territory occupied by the Red Army. And it turned out that the UPA felt free everywhere.

There is another very suspicious moment in Strutinsky's story. Neither the unknown old man in the forest nor Stepan Golubovich mention at all that the three strangers spoke Russian - on the contrary, they emphasize that they spoke German among themselves. But after all, Belov almost did not know the German language, and therefore, according to forged documents, he was listed as a Russian from the auxiliary personnel of the Wehrmacht, and Kaminsky spoke German poorly. It would be more logical for Siebert to talk to them in broken Russian as a distraction.

The main thing is that we do not know the results of the examination of the remains recovered from the grave on the outskirts of Boratin.

Only one expert opinion was published, which I will dwell on below.

On July 27, 1960, the remains of an unknown from Boratin were solemnly reburied on the Hill of Glory in Lvov under the name of Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov. But whose ashes are actually buried there?

Nikolai Vladimirovich Strutinsky spoke about all this in most detail in the documentary story "In the name of the Motherland", published in 1972-1973 in the magazine "Baikal". Here he criticizes Vitiska's report to Müller about the death of Lieutenant Siebert on two counts. Firstly, the head of the SD of the Galician district misinformed the chief of the Gestapo, reporting that "Pukh and his accomplices found shelter with Jews hiding in the forests in the region of Lutsk and Kivertsia in Volhynia, while he knew perfectly well that this took place on the territory of the Lviv district (not far from the village of Ganychev. - B.S.)". Secondly, "why in this telegram to Muller Vitiska claims that Pook was killed near the village of Belgorodka in the Verba region (Volyn)?" And Strutinsky gives the following explanation for everything:

"The first is clear: Vytiska, who was in charge of the security of the Lvov district, showed the presence of armed Jewish groups on

foreign territory, which was within the competence of the chief of the SD of Volyn and Podolia, Dr. Karl Pütz. Thus, the cowardly fascist shied away from responsibility to Berlin, realizing that at the time of signing this telegram, the territory in question had long been liberated by Soviet troops, and battles were being fought in the Verba-Belgorodka area. So it is almost impossible to check the report to the Gruppenfuehrer in Berlin. In addition, Vitiska refers to the data of SS Gruppenfuehrer Prützmann, Berlin's authorized representative in that territory, who had already written off Paul Siebert as an active Soviet intelligence agent in the rear of the Nazi troops, which was reported to Berlin.

To be honest, Sgrutinsky's objections do not seem too convincing to me. I'll start with the Jewish self-defense unit. We do not know how the UPA people learned about its existence. Did the conductor Samuil Erlich fall into the hands of Bandera, or was Kuznetsov's report written about the visit to the detachment of Oile Baum? Perhaps Erlich, saving his comrades, could indicate the wrong place for the deployment of the detachment. UPA fighters

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special Service" @56

known to have dealt mercilessly with both Poles and Jews. If this version is correct, then Erlich, most likely, fell into the hands of the Bandera people precisely in Volyn, which means that Siebert and his companions were heading there. If the exact location of Baum's people was indicated in the Kuznetsov report, then Ober-Sturmbannfuehrer Vitiska did not make any sense to lead his own superiors by the nose. He himself offered to bargain for Siebert's papers from the Ukrainians, and if they fell into the hands of Muller or Pruttsman, the deception would immediately be revealed. I think that Kuznetsov did not indicate the exact place where they met Baum in the report out of caution, and the Ukrainian rebels took Erlich's fictitious testimony seriously.

And it's completely incomprehensible why Vitiska had to deceive Muller, reporting the place of death of the Russian intelligence officer? Is it again only to show the presence of UPA units not on their own, but on foreign territory? It was as if Berlin did not know that the Banderites were active both in Volhynia and in Galicia. And why did the leadership of the UPA need to deceive the Germans by naming the false place of Siebert's death? After all, fierce battles between the Wehrmacht and the advancing Soviet troops were already going on near Boratin in April 1944, and the people of Vitiski would still not be able to check the message of the Ukrainians, and they would not.

For some reason, all these elementary considerations did not occur to Strutinsky. He continues:

"However, this fact (the death of the Kuznetsov group in the area of Verba, Belgorodka. - B.S.) was subject to verification. Ivan Ilyich Dzyuba was sent to the named area, who, with the help of the employees of the Dubnovsky regional department of the state security committee, comrades Kravets and Yarovoy, managed to identify several former bandits (this is how the author calls the fighters and commanders of the UPA. - B. S.), acting at that time in the area of the villages Ptych, Velikaya Milcha and Belgorodka. Information was received from them that approximately in mid-February 1944, a gang combat unit at night collided near the village of Belgorodki with a passing detachment of Soviet partisans. In the ensuing skirmish, the gang lost three people killed. These three deserted from the SS division "Galicia" and were

dressed in the uniform of the German army. It was established that they were buried in the cemetery of the village of Velikaya Milcha and that a priest was present at the burial. The priest was also found. It turned out to be Vorona Ivan Semenovitch, who served in the church of the village of Ptycha. In a conversation with Dziuba, he dedicated us to the details:

- At night, armed men came for me. Then it was forbidden to engage in questioning, and I obeyed, not knowing at all where I was being taken. I was taken to the cemetery of the village of Velikaya Milcha. There were already several, apparently, local peasants, and at the freshly dug grave there were three coffins with the dead in the form of German soldiers. I performed the prescribed ceremony, and they were buried.

From the residents of the village of Velikaya Milcha, it became known that in the post-war years women from neighboring villages came to the grave, mourned the dead, but who these women were and where they live - no one could say.

Thus, everything testified that the OUN leaders misinformed their chief Vitiska (Obersturmbannfuehrer, probably, in a nightmare would not have dreamed that he would be made commander-in-chief of the UPA! - B.S.) and deliberately instead of Boratin indicated Belgorodka - Verba! They could be understood: they sensed that the hour of reckoning was near, and they covered their tracks.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@U

Listen to Strutinsky - the leadership of the Ukrainian rebels did nothing but misinform everyone and everything. But it is very difficult to understand much here. It turns out that the leadership of the UPA did its best to hide the fact that one of its detachments attacked Soviet partisans in the Belgorodka region and the death of three deserters from the SS division "Galicia" in that battle. To do this, for some reason, it was necessary to replace three defectors with three Soviet agents in German uniforms, and even inform the Germans about this - is it not with the expectation that after the defeat of Germany the document will go to the Chekists? ... Well, the murder of Kuznetsov and his comrades, from their point of view, would the Soviet authorities consider it a less significant crime than an attack on Soviet partisans?

In Strutinsky's story there is still a lot of incongruous, mysterious. Why, for example, in that battle with a partisan detachment of the UPA, only people in German military uniforms were killed and not a single Bandera man dressed in civilian or Polish uniform was killed? Why didn't the deserters take off their shoulder straps and buttonholes? After all, in the confusion of the battle, they could take them for the Germans and shoot them? And if the defectors got rid of shoulder straps and buttonholes, then why does Strutinsky repeat twice that they were dressed in German military uniforms, and not in uniforms without insignia? Why, finally, since after the war the relatives of the dead visited the grave, they did not put up either a cross or a plywood obelisk with an asterisk with the names of those who were buried? The grave remained unmarked.

If I were Strutinsky, I would be seriously interested in this burial in the cemetery in Velikaya Milcha. After all, there are too many coincidences: both the place is the same that appears in the German documents, and there were three dead in German uniforms - exactly as many as there were in Kuznetsov's group. By the way, Hauptmann Siebert and his companions were dressed in

army uniforms, as well as unknown persons buried in Velyka Milcha, while the former soldiers of the Galicia division had to wear SS uniforms. But in the field, the uniforms of the SS and the Wehrmacht differed only in buttonholes, and the locals could hardly know about such a detail ... Nevertheless, it seems to me that Strutinsky had some serious reasons to deal with the nameless grave in the rural cemetery, to achieve exhumation remains and try to determine whether among them are the remains of Kuznetsov, Belov and Kaminsky. For some reason, Nikolai Vladimirovich was not at all satisfied with the testimony of representatives of the UPA about the execution of Siebert and his associates on the territory already occupied by Soviet troops. Perhaps he attributed the mythical skirmish of Bandera with Soviet partisans to mid-February only because in March there were already units of the Red Army near Belgorodka and the UPA detachments moved further west from the front line so as not to be between two fires. Strutinsky stubbornly held on to Boratin. Here is how, according to him, events unfolded further:

"...Finally, we came to where, according to the investigation, the remains of Nikolai Kuznetsov, who died in Golubovich's hut, should be buried. The area that we had to explore literally by a meter occupied about two hectares. And only after a long, hard work, we managed to determine the approximate place of burial on an area of about ten square meters. On these ten squares, young shoots were just as densely green, grasses were intertwined, so that there was no sign of a grave.

Ivan Dzyuba and Mikhail Rubtsov looked at the frail

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@8

the person who brought us to this place. But he firmly stood his ground.

Again and again we examined the place, nicknamed the tract of Kutyky Ryabogo, and could not get rid of the same thought: why was Kuznetsov buried on the embankment, above the ditch, and not in the ditch itself? After all, it was March 9th. Then there was snow, there were frosts. It was easier to bury the body in a ditch. Why did the bandits cut the frozen earth on the embankment? No, there's something wrong here. No matter how these "friends" sent us on the wrong track ... The last provocation was when the investigative measures led us to the village of Boratin and, in particular, to the burial place of Kuznetsov's remains in the tract of Kutyky Ryabogo, and Dziuba and Rubtsov and I set about survey of the area. A rumor was spread in the village that supposedly one woman personally saw how in the early spring of 1944 a German officer was killed outside the village from a Soviet plane, and he was buried in the very place that we are examining.

This signal, of course, required careful verification. We spent more than two weeks, but the version was not confirmed. We understood that they were constantly trying to lead us aside, to direct actions on the wrong track. And now, at the final stage of the investigation, it would be deadly to fall for the bait of the enemy. After all, if we dig up a grave, and a completely different person turns out to be in it, what a trump card the enemy will receive! Then the investigation will be suspended indefinitely, and will it be resumed? No matter how great our impatience was, we decided to postpone the excavations in order to once again study the information, compare the facts, talk to someone.

With such considerations, of course, an objective assessment of the facts is impossible. The search was carried out with a predetermined result. Strutinsky and his comrades needed to find exactly Kuznetsov - and no one else. And then there is the obvious hostility of the local population, the "Westerners" not loved by the Chekists, who, not without reason, were suspected of sympathizing with the UPA. In the story "In the Name of the Motherland", in contrast to the more smoothed and edited "Feat", Strutinsky does not hide the very friendly attitude of the peasants towards those who were looking for Kuznetsov. The excavations, I recall, took place in 1959. Let me remind you: only six years have passed since the rebels stopped the open armed struggle against the Soviet troops - the inhabitants well remembered both mass deportations and merciless punitive expeditions of the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and state security. Therefore, the former Medvedev intelligence officer Strutinsky and his comrades were wary. Sometimes the peasants could really deliberately obfuscate the traces: after all, approaching the truth could reveal the participation of one of the fellow villagers in the UPA. At the same time, in order to appease the aliens and not have any trouble from them, the inhabitants of Boratin could willingly agree with Strutinsky, Rubtsov and Dziuba, confirming the versions so needed by those.

What alerted Strutinsky and forced to postpone the excavations? In his story we read:

"... Again, the three of us ... arrived at the Kutyky Ryabogo tract. This time we paid attention to the trenches and dugouts, barely visible in the thickets and landslides. We started making inquiries. It turned out that the second echelon of defense of the Nazi troops lay here and that it was being built in the second half of March 1944, that is, immediately after the events in Golubovich's hut.

The trenches began 10-20 meters from the proposed burial site. Therefore, we had to additionally find out when

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@

German troops came here, who from the population was involved in the construction of defensive structures. All these questions boiled down to one thing: why was the grave of the Soviet intelligence officer on an elevated place? It seemed to us that the secret of the burial place of N.I. Kuznetsov was connected with the construction of these trenches. And we weren't wrong."

Well, whoever really wants to discover something, definitely discovers something, and then convinces himself and others that what he found is exactly what he was looking for.

Based on eyewitness accounts and a consideration of what was eventually discovered in the grave on the embankment, the last moments of Kuznetsov's life in the story "In the Name of the Motherland" are described as follows:

"A stocky man in a black police uniform, in a high mutton hat, entered the room. Screwing up his eyes, he looked at the captives, not hiding his jubilation, and shouted:

- It is he. Exactly - he! Boys, over here! Arms at the ready and keep your eyes peeled!...

"Now that's all," Kuznetsov decided.

One slight digression is needed here. "The leader of the Chernygora (Chernogora) gang, a man in a police uniform and a hat, according to Strutinsky, was an agent of the SD and, on the instructions of Vitiski and Krause, was looking for the Soviet intelligence officer Siebert. In "Feat" he directly tells his lads that they caught Siebert. In "In the Name of the Motherland" it is limited only to the indefinite: "This is he."

Let's continue reading this story:

"Boys, let me smoke," Kuznetsov calmly turned to the OUN (again, it's not clear in what language. - B.S.). "Maybe someone can find it?"

One of the OUN members silently poured a pinch of samosad on the table, tore
piece of newspaper.

Rolling up his cigarette, Kuznetsov, with the elder's permission, got up and bent over the lamp. (Although Chernygor demanded to keep an eye on the detainees, but his subordinates and Kuznetsov's hands were untied, and they let him near the lamp ... Miracles, and nothing more! - B.S.) The bandits watched warily as he puffed, trying to burn a cigarette from fuming lamp.

When the leaders entered the room, the lamp went out and a clear voice said: "In the name of the Motherland!"

Shots hit. For a fraction of a second, flashes illuminated Kuznetsov, who stood to his full height with a grenade to his chest. Behind him, Jan Kaminsky crouched on the floor by the bed. At the door, crushing each other, Bandera crowded in horror. There was an explosion. Yellow flames erupted. The wounded screamed heart-rendingly. Outside the walls of the hut among the bandits there was a commotion. Random shots filled the silence of the March night. From the yard they fired at the walls at the extinguished windows. (Did they expect to shoot their own foremen? - B.S.)

After some time, about a dozen bandits carefully crawled into the hut. The cold rays of an electric lantern slid along the walls. Kuznetsov was lying in the middle of the room. His blood-soaked face twitched convulsively. All around, scattered by the explosion, like cattle, the wounded bandits growled. Siry was wounded in the stomach. Skiba in the back. At Chernygora, a trickle of black blood flowed down her hair, which was as hard as a pig's bristles. He moaned wildly; spitting blood clots.

Ivan Belov lay motionless in the yard near the rubble, suddenly killed by a dagger. Yan Kaminsky, jumping out the window, which was thrown open by the blast, went to the forest and had already reached it, but was mowed down by a bullet and

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special Service&69

finished off with a bayonet by a run-up bandit ... "Here he is. Eat!" shouted a bass voice, raising a large briefcase over his head, which the seriously wounded Yan Kaminsky was trying to carry away.

And this is how, according to Strutinsky, the Boratinsky peasants Spiridon Gromyak and Vasily Oleinik saw the body of the deceased Kuznetsov, who

Bandera instructed to bury him: "In the yard near the fence lay the dead body of an unknown person. Bloody and burnt clothes spoke of his belonging to the German military. The forehead was crushed, the hand was torn off, the chest was torn.

An attentive reader has probably already noticed that some details in the first and second stories do not match. In "Feat" Yan Kaminsky tries to leave with a Kuznetsov field bag, and in "In the Name of the Motherland" - with a briefcase. This, of course, is a trifle. Is there a big difference whether Siebert went with a briefcase or with a field bag? Although, from this discrepancy, one can understand that Strutinsky and his comrades never found either a briefcase or a bag in the alleged grave of Kuznetsov. It is not so important, probably, and what were the last, dying words of the legendary scout. In the first case, the author forced him to utter a rather long tirade on the topic that it is better to die standing than to live on his knees, in the second he limited himself to a short one: "In the name of the Motherland!", making these words the title of the story. But even from such a discrepancy, it can be concluded that Strutinsky did not meet with direct eyewitnesses of the last minutes of Kuznetsov's life (or the person whom he mistook for Kuznetsov) and, naturally, did not know what exactly the intelligence officer said before his death.

But in the description of the body of Kuznetsov, who died after the explosion, some differences between the two stories are, as we will see later, of fundamental importance. And here and there, Kuznetsov turns out to have a severed right hand and a torn chest. But in Podvig, serious wounds are also noted on his stomach, while his head seems to have suffered only slightly: only his "calm and strict" face is covered in blood, and Kuznetsov still lives for several minutes, dying in agony. In the second story, the scout's stomach turns out to be unharmed, but the damage to the face is much more severe than in the "Feat". However, even with a shattered forehead, he somehow lives on for some time, since his face "trembled convulsively." After I quote below the results of the examination, readers will understand all the "black humor" of Strutinsky's documentary stories.

In the story "In the Name of the Motherland", Spiridon Gromyak, one of the two peasants who are to bury Kuznetsov's body, tells his companion, Vasily Oleinik: "Don't look, Vasily, that he is wearing a German uniform ... The rumor has passed, the Soviet partisans have been killed in Golubovich's house. These lackeys do not touch the Germans, they live in friendship.

Vasily agrees with him. When the peasants brought the body to the Kutyky Ryabogo tract, it turned out that the ground was frozen, but they did not take scrap. And Gromyak offered to bury the unknown person in the snow, in a ditch, and when the earth thawed, to return and bury him in the ground: after all, a Soviet partisan, and not some German, to leave him to be eaten by animals.

There can hardly be any doubt that we are dealing here with literary fiction. Well, how, I wonder, could the peasants immediately find out that those who died in Golubovich's hut were not Germans, but Soviet intelligence officers? Did the commander of the rebel detachment manage to demonstrate to everyone

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. secret wrestling spetslu Zh863.

the village found at Kuznetsov's report?

Strutinsky needed such perspicaciously true knowledge of the peasants about the dead and their sympathy in order to once again stigmatize the UPA as an accomplice of the German occupiers and at the same time explain why, in the end, the grave ended up on an embankment, and not in a ditch. The peasants supposedly wanted to bury Kuznetsov in a proper way, but for now they simply buried him in the snow, so that in two weeks they would return and bury him properly, in a Christian way. But they could not return. In a word, they wanted the best, but it turned out badly. Because further, according to Strutinsky, this is what happened:

"A week later, Hitler's regular units appeared in Boratin. Soldiers broke peasant huts, dragged logs to the outskirts of the village. They built a two-tier defense. The command post of the second echelon was built in the tract of Kutyky Ryabogo, where the population was hastily driven from the surrounding villages and farms to dig trenches, trenches and dugouts (dugouts, I note, they are still building, not digging. - B.S.). By this time the sun and wind had removed the heavily darkened snow. In the ditch, where the ledge of the trench crashed, a depression formed, from which a man's hand protruded ... An elderly tall Hauptmann in pince-nez, accompanied by two officers, arrived at the scene. He ordered to clear the corpse of snow and bring it to the surface. Having examined the tattered clothes, underwear and socks, the Hauptmann exclaimed indignantly: "This is a German officer! He was apparently killed by local bandits. Raise a platoon of Hans. Pay those brutes for the death of our officer!"

Hauptmann pointed to the farm Zaluch: "Burn! Down to the ground!... And bury the dead officer right here, on a hill!"

So, that means that Kuznetsov's grave appeared on the embankment next to the ditch. The punitive expedition went to the neighboring village of Chernitsa: one of the residents of Zaluch, removing the threat from his native farm, indicated that the wounded bandits who killed the German officer were hiding in Chernitsa. There, the Germans found only one wounded UPA fighter, nicknamed Siry, who was cared for by a local girl Stefania Kolodinskaya. They were killed by German soldiers and buried by their own in the Chernitsa cemetery.

According to Strutinsky, it turns out that Nikolai Kuznetsov, after his death, again became Paul Siebert for some time. The Germans buried him as a German officer who died at the hands of bandits, and took revenge on the killers. It is characteristic that the Ukrainian rebels were equally called bandits by both the Soviet and German sides.

But again, there are too many questions. Did the locals driven to defensive work know German so well that they were then able to tell in detail what exactly the elderly hauptmann said to his subordinates? And was the German punitive action really connected with the discovery of the corpse of a German in the tract of Kutyky Ryabogo? After all, some of the soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht could have been killed near Chernitsa. And, strictly speaking, there is no evidence that this Siry participated in the fight that took place in Golubovich's hut.

In general, it is strange that no one died from the explosion of the Kuznetsov grenade, except for the scout himself. Yes, and the bodies of Belov and Kaminsky disappeared to no one knows where. After all, in both stories of Strutinsky it is said about the burial of only one deceased. Well, Bandera would not force the peasants to gouge in the frozen March land for three whole

pits. Surely people would put the bodies of three dead Soviet

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶ "

scouts in one, mass grave. Here, perhaps, is the clue why the grenade spared the UPA fighters. After all, otherwise it would have been necessary to explain where the dead Bandera people had gone, and the author did not have enough creative imagination for this. First of all, they were looking for the remains of the Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Kuznetsov, after the appearance of Medvedev's book and the film "The Feat of the Scout" turned into a cult figure. His comrades-in-arms Ivan Belov and Yan Kaminsky, awarded only the Order of the Patriotic War of the 1st degree, never became the heroes of films and books specially dedicated to them.

It is also strange that in both Strutinsky's stories only those people of the Chernygora detachment who were wounded in Golubovich's hut appear under nicknames. Is it possible that the memory of fellow villagers did not retain other names, or at least nicknames?

Of the four wounded in Golubovich's hut (they bore the nicknames Siry, Skiba, Mazepa and Chernygora), Strutinsky and his comrades managed to find only one in 1959. The skiboy turned out to be Pyotr Vasilievich Kumanets, who had been convicted two years earlier for participation in the Chernygora gang in 1944 and was serving time in Siberia. According to Strutinsky, "there were other bandits with the same nickname, but we settled on Kumanets." Maybe because he was the only one who turned up under the arm?

Pyotr Vasilyevich no longer had to choose. The Chekists now also sewed him - real or imaginary - participation in the German punitive detachments, and this threatened with an extra "ten", and that "tower". And Skiba-Kumanets willingly confirmed that they "surrounded the hut in which they disarmed two unknown persons dressed in the uniform of Hitler's servicemen." He recalled both the fan explosion and his injury: "And now fragments of that grenade are sitting in my liver ... After the grenade explosion, I lost consciousness ..." Strutinsky believes that nevertheless "Kumanets ... was not up to frank end." Perhaps Nikolai Vladimirovich did not like that Skiba forgot to mention the third in German uniform - Belov.

The testimony of Kumanets seemed to convince the group that conducted the investigation that it was Kuznetsov who was buried in the tract of Kutyky Ryabogo. Most of all, Strutinsky and his friends were afraid to find someone else instead of the legendary intelligence officer, God forbid - a German officer. On September 16, 1959, the grave on the embankment was exhumed. Strutinsky testifies: "At a depth of a little more than a meter, a human skeleton rested." But the remains were of little use for identification. Members of the investigation team heard about the existence in Moscow of a plastic reconstruction laboratory that restores a person's skull. Vladimir Mikhailovich Zelengurov, an expert, was sent to the capital and met with the head of the laboratory, Doctor of Historical Sciences Mikhail Mikhailovich Gerasimov. And a few days later, Zelengurov called Strutinsky and joyfully said: "Gerasimov said: 'Tell the comrades that everything that was submitted for examination - photographs, documents and a skull - ninety-nine and ninety percent belong to the same person.' " After this the investigator ventured to endure and

official decision on examination. It is worth quoting almost completely, as Nikolai Vladimirovich Strutinsky does in his book:

"Resolution

"On the appointment of additional experts to the commission". 21

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services63}

December 1959, Lvov. The senior investigator of the Directorate N. Rubtsov, having examined the case materials, found: on March 9, 1944, in the village of Boratin, Podkamensky district, Lviv region, occupied by German troops (in fact, not only was there no German garrison in this village, but, apparently, the auxiliary police created by the Germans, so that the UPA was the master of the situation in those places. - B.S.) in the house of Golubovich Stepan Vasilyevich, members of the OUN gang of Chernygora captured two unknown men in the uniform of the German army, one of whom blew up a grenade in his hands and died.

It can be seen from the testimonies of witnesses that the unknown were Soviet partisans dressed in the uniform of German military personnel, and, as established by the materials of the investigation, they could be Hero of the Soviet Union Kuznetsov Nikolai Ivanovich and Kaminsky Yan Stanislavovich (Belov is strangely absent from this document. - B.S.).

On September 17, 1959, the corpse of the alleged Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov was exhumed, but it was not possible to establish his identity from the remains of the investigators.

At the same time, the forensic medical examination established the presence of a number of signs, such as: growth, structure of the skull, lower jaw, location and defects of the teeth, absence of the right hand, which convincingly indicate a similarity with the verbal portrait of Kuznetsov Nikolai Ivanovich. According to the exhumed skull, a special examination was appointed, the production of which was entrusted to the head of the laboratory of plastic reconstruction of the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Doctor of Historical Sciences M. M. Gerasimov.

Given the complexity of the examination and the requirements of comrade. Gerasimov M. M., guided by Article 64 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Ukrainian SSR, decided: to include additionally in the composition of experts the teacher of the Lvov State Medical Institute Zelengurov Vladimir Mikhailovich, with an expert experience of 13 years, and who personally knew Kuznetsov Nikolai Ivanovich - Strutinsky Nikolai Vladimirovich, sending them for this goals to Moscow to the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

After reading such a decision, the uninitiated may come to the conclusion that Kuznetsov was an invalid in life, with an amputated right hand. Unfortunately, the materials of the forensic medical examination have not yet been published. It is very difficult to understand anything from the text of the resolution. What exactly was the height of Kuznetsov and that of the man whose skeleton was seen on September 17, 1959? On what basis were conclusions drawn about the similarity of the structure and defects of the teeth and lower jaw of this skeleton and Kuznetsov? Perhaps Nikolai's dental chart has been preserved.

Ivanovich? But then she alone, especially if she had an x-ray of the oral cavity with her, should have been enough to reliably identify the remains, and there would be no need for a plastic examination. But if the condition of Kuznetsov's teeth was established according to the testimony of witnesses, then the conclusion of the investigator is worth little.

It is also unclear whether the skeleton had damage to the hip bones, which could indicate a wound in the abdomen. Why is it mentioned in Podvig that Kuznetsov was wounded not only in the chest and face, but also in the stomach during the explosion? Did the writer come up with this or did he borrow it from the examination report?

What were the results of the "special examination" conducted by M. M. Gerasimov? Here is the text of the conclusion he signed on December 24

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services 6 5.

1959, also cited in Strutinsky's story "In the Name of the Motherland":

"On October 24, 1959, 18 photographs of N. I. Kuznetsov and the exhumed skull were transferred to the laboratory of plastic reconstruction of the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences by the forensic expert V. M. Zelengurov. The question was posed to the expert - is the skull submitted for examination the skull of N.I. Kuznetsov?

All photographs shown belong to the same person photographed during 1942-1943.

The presented skull is fragmentary. The entire front part and vault are divided into 15 pieces.

The state of the skull required a very complex and careful restoration. This important work was carried out by the laboratory researcher T. S. Surnina.

Of all the photographs received, the most clear photograph was taken, taken from N.I. Kuznetsov in 1943. On it, N. I. Kuznetsov is fixed almost frontally with a barely perceptible turn to the left, the posture is strict, but not tense (see photo No. 1). This photo has been retaken. On the resulting negative, marks were made with a pencil: the hairline, the lower part of the wings of the nose, the corners of the mouth, the corners of the lower jaw. A straight line was drawn through the outer corners of the eyes. From these points, two straight lines were lowered, connecting at the most protruding point of the chin. Thus, a triangle was built, the base of which passed under the irises of the eyes, and the top was facing the chin (see photo No. 2). Strips of paper were glued onto the real skull, fixing the cut lines of the eyes. To the points corresponding to the outer corners of the eyes, strips of paper were glued, which were connected at the most protruding part of the chin. In addition, marks were made of the hairline, the lower part of the wings of the nose and the angles of the lower jaw (see photo No. 3), the photograph of the skull was made through the negative of the face. The combination of triangles on the skull and on the face testified to the coincidence of the angle of the face and skull. The face and skull negatives were combined. The resulting prints are attached (see photo No. 4).

Conclusion:

1. After reviewing the submitted photographs, I come to the conclusion that they are all photographs of the same person. According to the decision, they belong to N.I. Kuznetsov.

2. The skull presented for examination was shattered, which confirms the death as a result of a shrapnel wound in a close explosion of fans or mines.

3. Performing the restoration of the skull (work by T. S. Surnina) correctly.

4. The alignment of the photograph of the face and skull gives a clear idea of the complete coincidence of all morphological details of the face and skull belonging to the same person.

According to the terms of the examination, the photographs presented belong to N. I. Kuznetsov. The skull exhumed and submitted for examination also belongs to N.I. Kuznetsov.

It would seem that the conclusion of the plastic reconstruction laboratory unequivocally establishes that Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov was buried in the grave in the Kutyky Ryabogo tract. However, again a number of questions arise. After all, as it is clear from the words of Strutinsky, Gerasimov, already a few days later, even before the restoration of the skull was carried out, was 99.9 percent convinced that this skull belongs to the person depicted in the photographs, i.e. Kuznetsov. And the customer of the examination

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁵

was very serious - the KGB. One gets the impression that the Chekists really wanted the remains of the unknown, found in the tract of Kutyky Ryabogo, to be the remains of a famous intelligence officer. And then there was the condition of the skull submitted for examination, so much depended on how exactly the restoration would be carried out. And when experts are biased for some reason, there is always a danger that the results of intermediate operations will be adjusted to a predetermined end result.

Another thing is disturbing. Judging by the description in the expert opinion, the skull of the unknown person was very badly damaged in the front part. And not just damaged, but fragmented into 15 parts. There is no guarantee that all fragments of the skull fell into the hands of experts. In this case, the result of the examination of the body was more dependent on how accurately the restoration would be carried out. And the partiality of experts makes one doubt that the restoration was carried out flawlessly.

I also note that the damage that was inflicted before death on the skull of - let's say - unknown, is too great for the usual shrapnel fans. It can be assumed that Kuznetsov did not have time to throw a grenade, since he was hit by Bandera shots, and the grenade exploded in the scout in his right hand near the chest, tearing off his wrist and hitting his face and chest. However, it is not believed that a fragmentation grenade could destroy the skull so thoroughly, crushing it into 15 fragments at once. And, of course, a man with a crushed skull would not have lived for a second after the explosion and could not, as Strutinsky claims, look at his killers with a "calm and stern face." There was nothing left of the face.

If Kuznetsov blew up in Golubovich's hut not a fragmentation, but a much more powerful anti-tank fan, then it is not clear how the hut survived at all and why the Banderaites who were with him received shrapnel wounds. Strutinsky, after all, is talking about shrapnel wounds. And how, interestingly, those few UPA fighters who were at the time of the explosion very close to Kuznetsov managed to survive, in particular those who gave a light to the "German officer". By the way, neither in the investigator's decision, nor in the expert's opinion, nor in the text of Strutinsky himself, is it mentioned anywhere that fragments of a grenade were found in the skull from the Kutyky Ryabogo tract. And they were supposed to be there. From the fragments one could determine the type of grenade or other explosive device, mine, projectile or air bomb. Maybe the unknown person died not from a grenade explosion, but from a bomb, mine or shell explosion? Then everything falls into place. These more powerful charges could well have caused the terrible damage to the skull described in Gerasimov's conclusion. Considering that a person usually instinctively hides himself from an explosion with his right hand, it can be explained why, in addition to wounds in the chest, stomach and face, the unknown man's right hand was torn off.

If we assume that an unknown person from the Kutyky Ryabogo tract died from a bomb or a shell, then the testimony of the inhabitants of Boratin about a German officer killed by a bomb from a Soviet aircraft in those days when German troops held defenses near this village immediately comes to mind. Perhaps, in fact, the close explosion of a mine or an artillery shell became the cause of his death. This version seems to me the most plausible. And the nameless officer of the Wehrmacht did not die at all in an unequal battle with UPA fighters on the outskirts of Boratin. Most likely, this fight never happened. The episode with the unknown, undermining himself and the enemies with the last grenade, could well have been invented specifically for the heroic

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special #656

myth about Kuznetsov.

Only the most faithful, genetic, examination could put an end to it. For its implementation, the good will of the relatives of Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov, as well as the government of Ukraine and the city authorities of Lvov, is needed. The government of Russia could probably pay for such an examination, which is by no means cheap. Indeed, in fact, Kuznetsov is our national hero, and the Russian authorities should be interested in establishing the exact fact: who exactly is buried on the Hill of Glory in Lvov under a stone with a bas-relief of the famous intelligence officer and the inscription "Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov"? I am afraid, however, that the hero's relatives will be against the new examination because of the fear that the remains of a non-legendary scout will be in the grave. The Ukrainian authorities, however, may object to this examination out of fears of the exact opposite: what if it turns out that it was the Russian hero Kuznetsov and no one else who was buried in the grave?! I think that in reality the chances of "for" and "against" here are fifty-fifty.

If it turns out that Kuznetsov rests on the Lviv Hill of Glory, it will be possible to consider the transfer of his ashes to his homeland, to the Urals. In Ukraine, the fighters of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army are now considered heroes, at the hands of which Nikolai Ivanovich died. And the attitude towards the Soviet intelligence officer here is now different than in 1960. It's no wonder that his

the grave had already been subjected to barbaric desecration. Probably, it would be better for Kuznetsov now to lie in his native land.

If the examination proves that not Nikolai Ivanovich, but another person, rests on the Hill of Glory, then this, too, can be seen as a certain moral meaning. Kuznetsov brilliantly played the role of Ober-Lieutenant of the Wehrmacht Paul Siebert for two of the most beautiful years of his life. And after his death, an unknown fallen German officer was mistaken for the legendary Soviet intelligence officer. And maybe then make this burial the Tomb of the Unknown German Soldier? Hundreds of thousands of them, along with millions of Red Army soldiers, found their death on Ukrainian soil, courageously fulfilling their duty, believing, albeit deceived, that they were fighting for their homeland and their people and not bearing responsibility in their bondage and sacrifice for the crimes of the Nazi regime.

- My friend David Glantz wrote his book "Zhukov's Greatest Defeat. The impressive failure of the Red Army in Operation Mars", about the battle on the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead in the autumn and winter of 1942, dedicated "to the memory of tens of thousands of Soviet and German soldiers who fought and died or survived in the terrible meat grinder of this operation only to be forgotten by history." Probably, more than fifty years after the end of the Second World War, we should treat our former enemies in the same way and not consider Wehrmacht soldiers as fascists and criminals?

And why do we need this myth? Let the place and time of Kuznetsov's death, the details of his last battle, remain forever unknown. Let us not even know whether Nikolai Ivanovich died in battle or was captured and then shot, whether he was killed by Ukrainian rebels as a German officer or as a Bolshevik agent. He was one of the last knights of our by no means romantic era, who firmly believed in his mission. On September 20, 1943, before going to destroy Koch Dargel's deputy (he miraculously survived), Nikolai Ivanovich left a letter in Medvedev's detachment, which he asked to be opened only in case of his death. Here is what he wrote in this peculiar will:

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the special services

"On August 25, 1942, at 24:05, I descended from the sky by parachute to mercilessly avenge the blood and tears of our mothers and brothers, groaning under the yoke of the German invaders.

For eleven months I studied the enemy, using the uniform of a German officer, making my way to the very lair of the satrap - the German tyrant in Ukraine, Erich Koch. Now I'm moving on to action.

I love life, I'm still very young. But if for the Motherland, which I love like my own mother, you need to sacrifice your life, I will do it. Let the fascists know what a Russian patriot and Bolshevik is capable of (although Kuznetsov never became a member of the party, he had a communist worldview; they said about such people: "a non-party Bolshevik." - B. S. N). Let them know that it is impossible to conquer our people, just as it is impossible to extinguish the sun. Let me die, but in the memory of my people the patriots are immortal... I will go to my death with the name of my Stalin, father, friend, teacher. Say hello to him."

Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov gained immortality. We do not know where his grave is, but the image of Lieutenant Siebert, who fearlessly shoots high-ranking Nazis, will forever remain in our memory. Almost all the victims of the Kuznetsov bullets were involved in one way or another in war crimes or crimes against humanity. Erich Koch in 1961 was sentenced to death by a Polish court, commuted to life imprisonment (Gauleiter died in 1986). And in the same row of criminals, only a higher rank, stood the one with whose name Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov went to his death, knowing nothing about the atrocities of the Stalinist regime.

Of course, Kuznetsov, a brilliant intelligence officer, should have been sent to Germany for many years of illegal work. But, undoubtedly, the outbreak of war crossed out for him the possibility of such a destination. There was no time at all for the "acclimatization" of the new resident and the creation of his agent network in the Reich. And Nikolai Ivanovich, with his unique abilities, was used as an ordinary front-line intelligence officer who obtained information mainly of a tactical nature, and as a terrorist who destroyed the officials of the criminal occupation administration. And this is also the drama of his fate ...

HUNT FOR STALIN IN THE AUTUMN OF FORTY-FOUR: UNEXPLODED BLADES OF DIRT

By the time the "odyssey" of agents Gregor and Igor unfolded and the action in Bogomolov's novel took place, at the end of the summer and autumn of 1944, perhaps the only attempt by German intelligence to organize the assassination of Stalin dates back. Although there are still more questions than answers here, and there is no certainty that such a plan really existed, and was not invented after the war by the bosses of the German and Soviet special services.

Schellenberg spoke about the assassination attempt on Stalin in his memoirs. Here is how it was according to the German version of the memoirs:

"The Reich Foreign Minister asked me to come to him on urgent business at Fuschl Castle in Austria. On the way, I stopped by Himmler, who at that time was on his special train in Berchtesgaden (this happened in the middle of 1944. - B.S.) He told me in general terms that Ribbentrop was going to discuss with me the question of the assassination attempt on

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁸

Stalin. It was very difficult for Himmler himself to give such an order, since he, like Hitler, believed in historical providence and considered Stalin the great leader of his people, called to carry out his mission. The fact that Himmler decided nevertheless to arrange an attempt on Stalin's life testified to how pessimistic he now looked at our military situation.

When I arrived in Fuschl, Ribbentrop first started talking about the United States, about the possibility of Roosevelt being re-elected to the presidency, and other things. I kept up the conversation and was about to take my leave, when suddenly

Ribbentrop changed his tone and with a serious expression asked me to linger. He needs, he said, to discuss with me one very important matter, in which no one is privy except Hitler, Himmler and Bormann. He has thoroughly read my information about Russia and believes that there is no more dangerous enemy for us than the Soviets. Stalin himself is far superior to Roosevelt and Churchill in his military and statesmanship; he is the only one who truly deserves respect. But all this makes us consider him as a dangerous adversary who must be eliminated. Without him, the Russian people will not be able to continue the war. Ribbentrop said that he had already talked with Hitler on this subject and told him that he was ready to sacrifice his own life, if necessary, in order to carry out this plan and thereby save Germany. And Ribbentrop began to lay out his plan. It is necessary to try, he said, to involve Stalin in the negotiations in order to shoot him at a convenient moment. True, Hitler noticed, Ribbentrop said, that Providence would avenge this, but nevertheless he asked who could undertake to put this plan into practice, or who could at least be designated as an escort. Here Ribbentrop stared at me with his motionless gaze and said: "I told the Fuehrer your name." After that, he added, Hitler instructed him once again to discuss the matter properly with me. "That's why," he concluded, "I asked you to come." I think that my face during this monologue did not breathe intelligence, since the plan seemed to me more than chaotic. But at least some answer was needed. However, before I could open my mouth, Ribbentrop said that he had thought through the practical implementation of the plan to the smallest detail. Of course, he said, one should expect the Soviet guards to be extremely vigilant, so it was unlikely that a hand grenade or a pistol could be brought into the meeting room. But he knows that our technical department has developed a model of a fountain pen, in the body of which a revolving barrel is mounted. A standard caliber bullet fired from this "handle" at a distance of six to eight meters hits the target exactly. Since such a pen was unlikely to arouse the suspicions of the guards, this plan, Ribbentrop believed, could be successfully carried out, so long as the hand did not tremble.

Telling, Ribbentrop was inspired to self-forgetfulness and became like a teenager who had read "Indian" novels about the adventures of Vineto. But he had to answer only carefully weighing every word: after all, he would have reported to Hitler to everyone. I said that although the plan seemed to me feasible from a technical point of view, the main problem was how to get Stalin to the negotiating table at all. Based on my experience in dealing with the Russians, which I had accumulated in Stockholm, I thought that this would not be an easy task. (Through my associate Dr. Langben, I tried to establish contacts with Russia to discuss the possibility of a rapprochement between Germany and the Soviet Union. By this I wanted to put pressure on the Western

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services

allies by spreading information about such negotiations with the help of a third party. But my attempts failed, as Stalin - obviously distrustful of us, aided by Ribbentrop's clumsy intervention - abruptly changed course. It could also be that Stalin intended to carry out only a tactical maneuver in order to put pressure on the Western allies for his part.) I also did not hide the fact that it hardly makes sense to establish contacts with the Russians through me, since I have already undermined my reputation in their eyes. So I suggested

Ribbentrop to try to establish these contacts himself. If he succeeds, I am always ready to help him with advice and deed.

"I'll think about it," said Ribbentrop, "I'll talk to Hitler and come back to this question again." This, apparently, was the end of the plan to liquidate Stalin, for Ribbentrop never once touched upon this subject in his conversations with me later on.

Himmler, who was delighted by my reply to Ribbentrop, thought, however, that certain steps must be taken in this direction. Yielding to continuous pressure from above, our specialists eventually developed special equipment, the principle of which was as follows.

Our agent had to attach to one of Stalin's cars a small lump of a sticky substance that looked like a handful of clay. It was a highly effective explosive, easily sticking to any object under the pressure of the hand. It contained a radio-controlled explosive device.

The transmitter included in the equipment propagated ultrashort waves over a distance of up to seven kilometers, which automatically turned on the fuse, resulting in an explosion. This task was entrusted to two prisoners of war officers of the Red Army, who spent a long time in prison in Siberia and hated Stalin. On a large transport plane, on board of which there was a Russian police car, the agents were taken to the outskirts of Moscow. Under the guise of a patrol, they had to successfully penetrate the center of the Russian capital, since they not only spent several months preparing, but were also provided with all the necessary documents. But the plan still failed. So we never knew what happened to these people."

In the version of Schellenberg's memoirs, published in English translation, it is explained in more detail why such an exotic method of assassination was chosen: with clay - explosives and camouflage of an explosive device. It turns out that the two mentioned Soviet officers themselves offered the Germans their services in carrying out the assassination of Stalin. At the same time, one of them claimed that he was well acquainted with the mechanic of the Kremlin garage, who could help them fulfill their plans.

Reich Minister Ribbentrop himself does not say a word in his memoirs about his plan to eliminate Stalin during a possible peace conference in a neutral country with the help of a shooting "fountain pen". However, one must take into account the conditions in which Ribbentrop wrote his memoirs: in the Nuremberg prison, awaiting trial and the most severe sentence. After all, his memoirs were supposed to help him in conducting defense at the trial. A confession of the intention to personally kill, and at the cost of one's own life, one of the three leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition could only hasten the gallows, from which Ribbentrop still did not escape. Therefore, it is possible that in this case Schellenberg is telling the truth. Another thing is that

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret fight special services @ 9

plan to eliminate Stalin during a hypothetical Soviet-German peace conference seemed to the intelligence chief, as he directly admits in

American version of his memoirs, delusional.

Indeed, if we predict the possibility of Stalin's personal participation in any negotiations, then this could only happen in negotiations with Hitler, and not with Ribbentrop, who was too inferior to the Soviet dictator in terms of place in the ruling hierarchy and real political weight. The Führer, at the cost of his life, was clearly not going to attempt on Stalin's life in order to save Germany. In general, Hitler treated Stalin with a certain reverence, realizing the affinity of their totalitarian regimes and dictatorial souls. In 1942, during the period of the Wehrmacht's greatest victories, he called Stalin "one of the most unusual figures in world history", and at the very beginning of the war he expressed the hope that Stalin would reconcile with Germany, ceding the European part of the USSR, but leaving himself vast possessions in Asia. On July 22, 1942, in a table talk intended "for history", the Führer warned:

"It would be stupidity to treat the Stakhanov system with disdain. The armament and equipment of the Russian armies are the best proof of its effectiveness in the use of industrial labor. Stalin also deserves our unconditional respect. In his own way, he's a damn good guy! He knows his models, Genghis Khan and others, very well, and the scale of his industrial planning is surpassed only by our Four Year Plan. And there is no doubt that he very strongly advocates that there should be no unemployment in the USSR, a common phenomenon in capitalist states like the United States of America ..."

And a month later, on August 22, Hitler claimed that he would have nothing against Stalin running away somewhere to China.

In a word, "friend Adolf" waged war with a heavy heart against "friend Joseph." But what can you do? The Reich needed "living space", and it was opened only in the East. The USSR, as a political and economic, largely mystified power, stood in the way of Germany to world domination, and the racial theory of the Germans demanded the enslavement of Slavic "subhumans" who could only serve the Aryan "race of masters."

A completely different situation than in the middle of 1942 developed two years later, in the middle of 1944, after the Allied landings in Normandy and new crushing defeats of the German troops on the Eastern Front. Now, according to Schellenberg, Hitler, albeit not without hesitation, as they say, reluctantly, was ready to sanction the assassination attempt on the Soviet leader in the illusory hope that the success of the terrorist attack could lead the confused, destabilized Russia out of the war. These calculations, of course, did not have any serious basis, and Stalin's likely successor, the stubborn Molotov, did not show any inclination towards a separate peace. And in general, it is not clear how the Soviet leaders could miss the already certain victory for the sake of any kind of agreements with such an odious, wild figure as Hitler.

Obviously, at that time, Schellenberg no longer doubted the defeat of Germany and did not want to associate his name with such a black thing at that time as an attempt on Stalin, so as not to aggravate his guilt before the victors. From his memoirs one can see how stubbornly he avoided this assignment, trying to pass it on to Ribbentrop or Himmler. Dai understood the chief of German intelligence, an experienced professional, that

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services @ Z.

nonsense offers the venerable Reichsminister for Foreign Affairs. Stalin is not the kind of person to trustfully go to some neutral country to meet with high German representatives.

Such an option is also possible. Schellenberg did not have particularly warm feelings for Ribbentrop. The Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs was in favor of an agreement with Stalin, while the chief of foreign intelligence advocated a separate peace with the Western powers. After the execution of Ribbentrop, Schellenberg could simply discredit him, defeated, by inventing a story with a shooting fountain pen, with the intention of the Reich Minister to kill Stalin. So it turned out that all the words of Ribbentrop about the need to reach an agreement with Russia were nothing more than a cunning ploy to lure the Soviet leader into a death trap, but he, Schellenberg, appeared as an ardent supporter of reaching an understanding with England and the United States in the historical matter of confrontation communism.

It also raises doubts about the fact that in this story with the failed assassination attempt, everyone who participated in its discussion - Ribbentrop, Himmler and Hitler - were already dead by the time Schellenberg worked on his memoirs and could neither confirm nor refute what he wrote. So, in fact, nothing prevented the flight of Schellenberg's fantasy.

Whether Ribbentrop's plan actually existed or not, one thing is clear; in 1944, any sane person should have already been aware of its complete failure and impracticability. During the entire time he was in power, Joseph Vissarionovich traveled abroad only twice: to Tehran and Potsdam, to meet with the heads of the allied states. However, this "abroad" was then purely conditional, geographical, since in both cases the leader was in the territories occupied by Soviet troops.

Stalin did not like to take unnecessary risks, and after the assassination of Kirov he was very afraid for his life. The same Sudoplatov testifies: "Before the murder of Kirov, Stalin could often be met on the Arbat, accompanied by Vlasik, the head of personal protection and two bodyguards. He often visited the poet Demyan Bedny (who also lived in the Kremlin. - B.S.), sometimes visited his acquaintances who lived in communal apartments. Employees of the NKVD and veterans who had the badge "Honorary Chekist", which depicts a shield and sword, and a certificate for it, could freely pass to the Lubyanka; they had the right of passage everywhere except prisons. This whole system was immediately changed: the assassination of Kirov was a pretext for tightening control, which never weakened again. And the German agents in Moscow must have known how heavily guarded the Kremlin was and that Stalin and other members of the Politburo moved through the streets only in armored vehicles and heavily guarded. Why, agents - and German diplomats in pre-war Moscow could not help but notice how tightly the security regime is maintained in the Kremlin.

Despite this, according to Schellenberg, the leaders of the Reich kept putting pressure on him, and when in the autumn of 1944 the option of an assassination appeared, which had some chance of success, of course, a minimal one, he decided to take a chance. It is one thing to send agents to certain death, without any hope of success, and quite another when

a person who is personally acquainted with a mechanic serving Stalin's limousines. Here it is possible that the terrorist will be able to penetrate Stalin's entourage and, what the hell is not joking, organize his murder. And so

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ "?

counting on the acquaintance of the agent with an employee of the Kremlin garage, and an assassination plan was developed using clay explosives specially invented for this terrorist attack.

According to the American version of Schellenberg's memoirs, the plane with the two terrorists landed safely, but no further messages were received from them, although they had shortwave transmitters. The former chief of German intelligence gives the following explanation for this circumstance: "Personally, I do not believe that they tried to attempt an assassination attempt on Stalin. Most likely, they were captured at the landing site or voluntarily surrendered. Apparently, Schellenberg did not fully believe the two captured Soviet officers, suspecting that they would either immediately surrender to counterintelligence and lay out everything in the hope of a pardon, or hide - fortunately there are documents and money, lost in the vast expanses of the Soviets, in order to try to start a new life, forget and Siberian camps and German captivity.

In the USSR, the first publications about an attempt by German intelligence to organize an assassination attempt on Stalin appeared in the early 1970s. In 1971, Andrey Solovyov's essay "September forty-fourth ..." was published in the Smena magazine. It reported that on September 5, 1944, near the regional center of Karmanovo, Smolensk region, a patrol detained German agents who had documents in the name of the deputy head of the SMERSH counterintelligence department of the 39th Army of the 1st Baltic Front, Major Pyotr Ivanovich Tavrín, and the secretary of the same department, junior lieutenant Lidia Yakovlevna Shilova. They, as mentioned below, were landed from the Arado-332 heavy landing aircraft, which had a large range and flight altitude and was adapted for landing on unequipped sites. Tavrín and Shilova on a German motorcycle were heading to Moscow with the task of carrying out an assassination attempt on Stalin, but were arrested and confessed to everything.

Solovyov gives details of Tavrín's biography. According to him, the real name of the agent is Pyotr Ivanovich Shilo. He was born in 1909 in the Chernihiv region into a peasant family. In 1932, in Saratov, he was arrested for embezzling a large sum of money, but Shilo escaped from arrest and hid under the names of Serkov, Gavrina and Tavrina. In 1935 he was arrested a second time, but Pyotr Ivanovich fled again. In 1941, Shilo, under the surname Tavrín, was drafted into the army, and on May 30, 1942, on the North-Western Front, he voluntarily surrendered. Among the Germans, Pyotr Ivanovich Tavrín allegedly became an agent of the Gestapo, worked as a provocateur in prisoner of war camps and even for some reason in the Vienna prison, and then, in July 1943, he was allegedly recruited for the second time by the RSHA (although the Gestapo was just one of the departments of the Imperial Main Directorate of Security). Then, in July, Tavrín was sent to Berlin, where the head of the eastern department of the RSHA, Ober-Sturmbannführer Greife, suggested that he "carry out the most important terrorist act in Moscow." From the end of September 1943, for two months, the future terrorist underwent intensive training, then returned to Berlin in December, where he met with Otto Skorzeny and General Vlasov. He allegedly

they have not yet said who exactly will have to be killed (although they knew from the very beginning that it was about Stalin). Since January 1944, Tavrín was being prepared for being thrown into the Soviet rear, they sewed a uniform, made documents, and also provided the highest Soviet orders and the Golden Star (according to legend, he is a Hero of the Soviet Union). In April 1944, the agent was again summoned to Berlin, where they finally gave the name of the object of the assassination, and then again they took him to a meeting

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@3}

with Vlasov. In early August 1944, the preparation of Tavrín was completed. He was armed with pistols of various systems with poisoned bullets, a panzerknake hand-held armor-piercing grenade launcher that fits in the sleeve of his overcoat, magnetic mines, and was also supplied with a walkie-talkie and 500 thousand rubles of Soviet money. Tavrín's cohabitant L. Ya. Shilova flew as a radio operator. On September 4, an agent with a radio operator was thrown by plane into the area between Rzhev and Vyazma, and during the landing, the Arado crashed and could no longer take off.

Andrei Solovyov believed that on the second visit to Vlasov, Tavrín came into the view of Soviet intelligence. A warning has been sent to Moscow as to exactly when and where to wait for the terrorists who are about to kill the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. The author of the essay also published a photograph of Tavrín in the uniform of a Soviet officer, along with Obersturmbannführer Greife. True, upon closer examination of the angles in which both of them are depicted in this photo, it seems that it is mounted from two different shots. And indeed, as we will see later, Greife simply could not take a picture with Tavrín before sending him on a mission. Something else is interesting: in the photograph on Tavrín's chest, Soviet awards are clearly visible: the Gold Star of the Hero, the Order of Lenin, the Order of Alexander Nevsky, two Orders of the Red Banner and one Red Star (this list of orders will still be useful to us).

It should be noted that to carry an agent who was prepared in deep secret to assassinate Stalin to the headquarters of General Vlasov, where, as the Germans themselves guessed, there were many Soviet informants, and even to devote the collaborator general himself to the essence of the Taurus task is the height of absurdity and a violation of elementary conspiracy rules. It is no coincidence that when in 1976 Solovyov included an essay on the failed assassination attempt on Stalin in his book with the exciting title "Wolves Die in Traps", the episode with Tavrín's visits to Vlasov and some other obviously dubious details was prudently removed.

It is also completely incomprehensible why, to carry out such a responsible, difficult task, the Germans use an ordinary agent provocateur who had no experience of either a scout, or a saboteur, or a terrorist in the Soviet rear. Well, Schellenberg did not find more experienced people?

New questions to Solovyov's essay arise after acquaintance with Cookridge's book published in the same year. Here two pages are devoted to Tavrín. It is worth quoting them in full:

"In the summer of 1942, Gehlen's officers, who were interrogating prisoners of war, discovered in the camp a Soviet officer who, like Minishkiy, was an army political worker. His name was Pyotr Ivanovich Tavrín, and he was captured on May 30, 1942 in the Rzhev region.

The prisoner told the Germans who captured him that he was awarded the Orders of the Red Banner and Alexander Nevsky for service at the front and proudly showed them these awards (here Cookridge, as they say, pours a bullet: the Order of Alexander Nevsky was established later, in July 1942. - B. WITH.); but after the usual indoctrination, he expressed his readiness to return as a spy. Gehlen selected Tavrín for special training, and in September he was transferred behind the front line. For two years, Tavrín remained in Russia and was successively appointed to a number of responsible posts, first in the People's Commissariat of Defense, then in the Supreme Headquarters (apparently, Cookridge means the General Staff or the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. - B.S.) and finally in rank

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services @ m.

to the colonels of the headquarters of the margtal (actually, the general of the army. - B.S.) Ivan Chernyakhovsky. After the bloody battles for the Dnieper in 1943, he was one of 306 soldiers and officers who, together with their commander, were awarded the highest state award - the Golden Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union. During this entire period, he sent a stream of reports.

However, in August 1944, Tavrín sent a message that he had fallen under suspicion. (Well, just like in Bogomolov's novel! Wasn't Tavrín the prototype of Matilda, especially since, according to Solovyov, according to the documents, he was supposed to serve on the 1st Baltic Front, like the nameless cryptographer, to which the Neman group was communicating - B.S.). Gehlen decided to recall him and turned to the Zeppelin unit with a request to evacuate the agent on the Messerschmitt (meaning the Arado-332 already known to us, manufactured by the Messerschmitt company. - B.S.). The landing of an aircraft behind the front line in order to pick up agents was undertaken in exceptional cases and only when the person being rescued was a German. Gehlen therefore had to hide the nationality of Tavrín. What happened next, we can learn from the official Soviet version, which reads as follows:

"On September 5, 1944, on the road to Karmanovo near Smolensk, a patrol stopped a man and a woman riding a motorcycle. The man was dressed in the uniform of a colonel of the Soviet Army (like Cookridge; if he really quotes a document from the time of the Great Patriotic War, the original should be: "Red Army." - B.S.). He indignantly presented his documents, but the patrolman took him to the military intelligence post (rather, SMERSH counterintelligence or simply to the NKVD regional department. -B.S.), where they searched his duffel bag. There they found a German radio station, at least seven pistols with cartridges and a leather briefcase with the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union, the Orders of Lenin, the Red Banner and the Red Star, and several medals. Cipher notebooks and notes written in cipher on tissue paper were sewn into the seams. After appropriate interrogations (is it with beatings, or what? - B.S.), the man admitted that he was a German spy and that he and his wife were going to meet a German plane at a secret landing site in a meadow near Karmanov. A military unit was sent there, and when the plane landed, three crew members were captured, and one who resisted was killed. The investigation showed that PC. I. Tavrín, a former officer who went over to the side of the Nazi fascists in 1942 and later returned to his homeland, maliciously deceived the Soviet government. He was appointed to positions of responsibility and received high awards, while

while, pretending to serve the Motherland, he betrayed it many times.

The traitor Tavrín and his woman (or cohabitant, as L. Ya. Shilova is called by sources dating back to the KGB. - B. S.) suffered a well-deserved punishment for their crimes.

Such is the Soviet report, dressed in the familiar form of party jargon (unfortunately, Cookridge gives only an English translation of the document and we are deprived of the opportunity to appreciate the charm of the specific KGB version of the ridiculous party-bureaucratic language. - B.S.). This was the end of Tavrín, but what he did, expressed in several hundred messages, collected in three plump dossiers of the FHO, cannot be destroyed.

It is easy to see that Cookridge's version is directly opposite to Solovyov's. At the same time, the former British intelligence officer refers to

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Special Forces@5

a collection of documents "Soviet State Security Organs", published on the basis of materials from the Central State Archive of the USSR. It is difficult to say which archive is meant. And so far I have not been able to find a collection of documents with such a name. On the other hand, it is unlikely that Cookridge, who is very often confused in dates relating to the Great Patriotic War, and in general in Soviet realities, could himself compose such a document about the capture of Tavrín, and even give it the features of party-bureaucratic jargon.

Let's try to compare the versions of Solovyov and Cookridge.

Solovyov has Tavrín (his real name is Shilo) - first a soldier of unknown rank and position on the North-Western Front, voluntarily surrendered (the date of capture is May 30, 1942 - the same for both authors), then in the fall of 1944 - a major from SMERSH 39th Army of the 1st Baltic Front.

Cookridge's agent's surname is also Tavrín, but she is the only one. First, he is a political worker of an unidentified rank, taken prisoner from Rzhev against his will. At the moment of detention, Petr Ivanovich was a colonel, Hero of the Soviet Union, but his position was not named.

Solovyov claims that the Germans made Tavrín a Hero of the Soviet Union to facilitate the task of eliminating Stalin. Cookridge insists that Tavrín was indeed awarded this high title for crossing the Dnieper. Meanwhile, according to the USSR Ministry of Defense and a number of studies, among those who during the war years were awarded the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union, there are no persons with the surname Tavrín or Shilo. The decree of October 17, 1943, to which Cookridge refers, does indeed contain the names of 307 soldiers and officers of the 60th Army of I. D. Chernyakhovsky, including the commander himself, but the name Tavrín is not here.

In his book, Solovyov cites a photograph of a forged newspaper clipping allegedly seized from Tavrín with a genuine decree from the period of the battle for the Dnieper (but not dated October 17), where the last name of Tavrína, which is absent in the original, is substituted at the end of the list. If the correct version

Cookridge, two explanations are possible. Or Tavrín really served in SMERSH and he could have been rewarded with a closed decree, and after the hero was exposed as a German spy, all traces of conferring on him a high rank by the Chekists, perhaps, were destroyed. Or the real name of the agent was not Tavrín, not Shilo, but completely different, and with the help of false documents in the name of Tavrín, he tried to get to the landing site of the German plane sent for him. In this case, the real name of the agent should be sought, first of all, in the decree on conferring the title of Hero of the Soviet Union of October 17, 1943, where several dozen people still remain unidentified. Performances on the Hero were written in a hurry, by hand, in a combat situation. There was no time for calligraphy. And when the commander's shorthand was deciphered in higher headquarters, people were born with absolutely fantastic surnames - like Yuri Tynyanov's lieutenant Kizhe. Among them may be the real name of the German agent.

By the way, according to Solovyov, the Gold Star at Tavrín was genuine, but belonged to another person who was captured by the Germans. In any case, it is almost certain that at the time of his arrest, Tavrín had a genuine Gold Star, issued during the battle for the Dnieper, since he had a clipping with a decree of that time (any patrol by number could determine when the award occurred approximately).

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@6

Solovyov's essay states that when he was an agent provocateur, "pretending to be either a major Soviet commander or an employee of the state security agencies allegedly performing a "special task", skillfully legendizing his "heroic" activity at the front and in the German rear, Tavrín rubbed himself into confidence to Soviet prisoners of war and diligently identified the communists and the command and political staff, timely warned the Nazis about the impending escapes from the camps. Practically in all these hypostases Tavrín appears in Cookridge. Most likely, the information of both authors ultimately goes back to some one and the same circle of sources, but it is impossible to say with certainty what is true and what is skillful fiction.

Solovyov believes that Tavrín and his companion were landed in the Soviet rear from a landing German aircraft, Cookridge - that they, on the contrary, made their way to the landing site of Arado-332, which was supposed to evacuate agents in danger to Germany. And both call the same date and the same place where the aircraft landed - September 5, 1944, near the regional center of Karmanovo, Smolensk region. And here they are not mistaken. In responses to Solovyov's essay, sent to the Smena magazine, local residents confirm that in September 1944 a rumor spread about the landing of a German plane and about a motorcycle with a man and a woman detained by the NKVD. According to the memoirs of N. A. Noskova (Suntsova), a former employee of the VNOS (Aerial Surveillance, Alert and Communications) service, who spotted the Arado, "then they reported that the plane was waiting for signal lights (bonfires) in the clearing, but there were none, and the plane in the dark crashed into the forest, damaging the motors. This circumstance, as well as evidence that the crew of the plane was detained later than two on a motorcycle, seems to speak in favor of Cookridge's version. Moreover, Solovyov does not say anything about the fact that signal fires should have been lit at the landing site of the plane that delivered Tavrín and Shilova.

It can be assumed that Tavrín and his companion were supposed to light signal lights at a predetermined time in order to indicate to the pilots a clearing on which to land. However, the agents were arrested on their way to the meeting place, and therefore there was no one to make fires. And when Tavrín, after interrogation "with partiality", indicated the landing site of the capture group and the military unit sent there to comb the forest, it was not difficult to catch the crew of the damaged aircraft (it is possible that by the time of landing, the security officers had already surrounded the clearing).

So, either Solovyov voluntarily or involuntarily tries to belittle the intelligence activities of a valuable German agent of the LC. I. Tavrín, claiming that he was not a scout, but a terrorist, moreover, a failed one; or Cookridge creates a legend about Tavrín the scout, hiding a failed assassination attempt on Stalin, in the organization of which not only Schellenberg, but also Gehlen, who is so sympathetic to Cookridge, could be involved.

In 1993, in No. 3 of the Security Service magazine, new documents on the Tavrín case appeared, taken from the archives of the Soviet state security. It seemed that they would finally put everything in its place. However, upon closer examination, the published "Special Report on the Detention of German Intelligence Agents Tavrín and Shilova" and "Protocol of Interrogation of Tavrín Pyotr Ivanovich" (both undated documents) only further confuse the issue of Tavrín-Shilo and the attempt to organize an assassination attempt on Stalin in the fall of 1944. ..

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services @ y

The "special message" claims that the VNOS service detected an enemy aircraft flying in the direction of Mozhaisk at 1:50 am on September 5, 1944. At 3 o'clock in the morning, the plane, as if after shelling at the Kubinka station, turned back and, with the engine on fire, began to land near the villages of Yakovlevo and Zavrazhye, Karmanovsky district. An hour later, Almazov, the commander of the Zaprudkovskaya group for protecting order, informed the Karmanovsky regional department of the NKVD that the plane had landed and a man and a woman, both in Soviet military uniforms, drove off from it on a German-made motorcycle, both in the village of Yakovlevo asking for directions to Rzhev (by that time to the crash site the plane was already heading a group of Chekists). Local residents showed the two the way to Karmanovo, but the Gzhatsk NKVD task force had already set off to detain them. Then I would like to quote the document verbatim - painfully funny things are reported in it:

"2 kilometers from the village of Karmanovo in the direction of the village of Samuylovo, the head of the NKVD regional department, Comrade Vetrov, noticed a motorcycle moving towards the village of Karmanovo, and, according to signs, determined that those who were riding a motorcycle were those who left the landing plane, began to pursue them on a bicycle and overtook in the village of Karmanovo.

Oh, the NKVD officer Vetrov fully justified his last name and deserves to be entered in the Guinness Book of Records. I think he is the only person in the world who managed to catch up with a motorcycle on a bicycle. Yes, not simple, but the German "Pundap", even with cargo and people capable of speeds up to 120 kilometers per hour. At this or close to it speed along the country road

agents hardly rode, but not at the speed of a bicycle! After all, Solovyov and the authors of the "Special Communication" report that Tavrín and Shilova were in a great hurry to leave the danger zone.

Further, the "Special Communication" basically repeats the same information as in Solovyov's essay. The only significant difference is that the arrest of the terrorists was carried out at 6 o'clock in the morning not by a patrol, but by a task force of six people, senior police lieutenant Vetrov. When, after an inquiry to Moscow, it turned out that there was no Major Tavrín in SMERSH of the 39th Army and never was, Pyotr Ivanovich "was disarmed and confessed that he had been transferred by German intelligence by plane for sabotage and terror."

The list of items confiscated during the search is interesting: "3 suitcases with various things, 4 order books, 5 orders, 2 medals, the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union and a badge of the Guards, a number of documents addressed to Tavrín, money in Soviet signs 428,400 rubles, 116 mastic seals, 7 pistols, 2 center-fire hunting rifles, 5 grenades, 1 mine and a lot of ammunition. The absence of a radio station here is alarming, and Solovyov and Cookridge talk about seizing it from Tavrín after his arrest. But the number of pistols in all three sources is the same - seven. But the notorious "panzerknake" does not appear in the inventory of the seized.

In general, the "Special Message" leaves the impression that the NKVD officers acted like a watch, like a fail-safe mechanism, controlling literally every step of Tavrín and Shilova on their native land, as if they had been waiting for their arrival for a long time. Everything at the Chekists turned out smoothly, cleanly, without a hitch. The only thing that comes out is the super run of Vetrov's opera on a bicycle, and even a small lie, as you know, already inspires distrust.

But the very first interrogation of Tavrín gives rise to many insoluble problems.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Service Special Forces@8

questions. He admits that his real name is Shilo, and he became Tavrín because he was forced to hide from the police: he was in trouble with the criminal code due to repeated embezzlement of state money. At the front, Tavrín commanded a machine-gun company in the 369th division of the 30th army and on May 30, 1942, voluntarily surrendered, because on the eve of the special officer he asked why he became Tavrín from Shilo.

During interrogation, Pyotr Ivanovich immediately declared: "I have the task of German intelligence to get into Moscow and organize a terrorist act against the leader of the Soviet state, I.V. Stalin." About the circumstances of his recruitment by German intelligence, he testified as follows: "In June 1943, in the city of Vienna, where I was imprisoned for escaping from a prisoner of war camp, Gestapo officers Bayer and Telman called me and offered to cooperate with German intelligence, to which I agreed ". It is somewhat strange, you must admit, that the Gestapo, called upon to engage in counterintelligence operations, is recruiting for intelligence, and a person who, after a year of captivity, tried to escape after a year of captivity, is chosen as an object of recruitment. The reason that caused the sudden confidence of the Germans in him, Tavrín did not really explain, and the investigator was not puzzled by this circumstance for some reason. He was only interested in why it was Tavrín who was entrusted with the assassination of Stalin, believing, not without reason, that he

receiving such an unheard-of task, he also took up "treacherous work". Tavrín replied that Obersturmbannführer Greife had entrusted him with the execution of the terrorist act, since Zhilenkov had accordingly recommended him to him.

Georgy Nikolaevich Zhilenkov, the closest collaborator of General Vlasov, met Tavrín at the beginning of September 1943 in the Sandenberg camp, where agents from among former prisoners of war were gathered. Shortly before this, Greife invited Tavrín to think about which direction of activity to choose: intelligence proper, terror, or sabotage. Pyotr Ivanovich approached Zhilenkov, who had visited the camp with Vlasov. They started talking. Here is this conversation in the presentation of Tavrín:

"I told him that I agreed to work for German intelligence and was enlisted in the "Special Team". Zhilenkov approved of my behavior, saying: "Finally, I saw you where you should have been for a long time." Then I informed Zhilenkov about the call to Greif and about his offer to work in favor of German intelligence in the Soviet rear... After listening to me, he began to express anger against the leaders of the Soviet terrorist act against I. V. Stalin, since, according to Zhilenkov, this would be followed by the collapse of the Soviet state. At the end of our conversation, Zhilenkov recommended that I accept the task of terror and declared that upon my return to Berlin he would take the necessary measures to speed up my transfer to the USSR. He immediately made some notes in his notebook. And indeed, soon after the departure of Vlasov and Zhilenkov, I was again summoned to Greifa.

What happens next is amazing stuff. Tavrín said he was ready to engage in terror. Greife gave him the task of presenting in writing a detailed plan of the terrorist attack, and Tavrín, without hesitation, simply rewrote the plan for the assassination of Stalin, developed by Zhilenkov.

Before the war, Georgy Nikolayevich was secretary of the Rostokinsky District Committee of Moscow and a member of the Moscow City Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, repeatedly attended events where Stalin was present, and he believed that more favorable conditions for

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@9

committing a terrorist act - at ceremonial meetings.

Greif approved the plan of Zhilenkov-Tavrín and sent his future executor to the disposal of the head of the Zeppelin-Nord main team, SS Sturmbannführer Otto Kraus, to Pskov - the team was preparing agents. And again strange. The initiative in preparing the assassination attempt on Stalin comes from the Vlasovite Zhilenkov, and the Security Service (SD) accepts his plan with approval and begins training the executor as early as September 1943. It turns out that the tail twirls the dog. Meanwhile, until the autumn of 1944, the Germans considered the Vlasovites almost exclusively as an instrument of propaganda and intelligence, but not a political force at all, and kept them under their vigilant control. Then, from Schellenberg's memoirs, we know that Hitler and Himmler, with a heavy heart and thoughts of avenging providence, made the decision to eliminate Stalin only in mid-1944. Greife could not begin training an agent so early, without authorization, without the Führer's sanction - this is clear as God's day.

Or did the Germans want to blame everything later on the Vlasovites?

Another oddity of what Tavrín told is that, according to him, Greife and Kraus instructed him to carry out a terrorist attack not only against Stalin, but, if the opportunity presented itself, also against other members of the Soviet government - V. M. Molotov, L. P. Beria and L. M. Kaganovich. This is quite strange! Did the Germans seriously think that the assassination of Kaganovich or even Molotov would shake the Soviet state, contributing to the conclusion of a separate Soviet-German peace?

In general, the Germans and Vlasovites gave poor Tavrín tasks to the very eyeballs. He was supposed to kill Stalin, and destroy a couple of other Soviet leaders, and also, it turns out, establish contact with the underground anti-Soviet organization "Union of Russian Officers" allegedly operating in the Red Army ...

Greife and Kraus, of course, were well aware that even if the terrorist attack was successful, Tavrín would fall into the hands of the Chekists. However, while preparing it with other agents, the same Kraus at a "friendly dinner" willingly shared with him plans to send agents to the USSR. Several intelligence groups Tavrín willingly revealed to the investigators. One of them was heading just to the Vologda region, where Zeppelin agents were allegedly already operating (was it not a KGB game?).

Tavrín listed the Soviet orders issued to him by German intelligence. The same ones that are visible on him in the picture where he is with Greife, but for some reason there are no two medals "For Courage" named by Tavrín in the photo. During the investigation, he showed that Greife died in a car accident at the very beginning of January 1944, so Tavrín could no longer be photographed with him before flying on a mission in Soviet uniform, with all the orders and the Golden Star.

Tavrín gave another detail: although the Germans usually fabricated fake Soviet orders for their agents, he, in view of the extreme importance of the task being performed, was given genuine awards. But it is not clear why they needed to supply him with such a rich iconostasis, according to him, he had to remain a SMERSH officer only until his arrival in Moscow, and then change his documents and turn into an officer of the Red Army on vacation. The Germans believed that it was too dangerous to stay in Moscow with the documents of a Smershevite: intelligence and counterintelligence officers were very rarely awarded the title of Hero. Even the illustrious Sudoplatov never received this highest award. Major SMERSH with the Golden Star would have aroused, if not suspicion, then a special

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret fight special service * 69

interest in any patrol, and this is completely unnecessary for an agent.

Tavrín also claimed that Shilova did not know anything about the assignment and accompanied him only as a radio operator (since November 1943 they were husband and wife). His testimonies about the walkie-talkie he had and the "panzerknack", which he trained to shoot from, are plausible, but not confirmed: these items were not found with him during the arrest and were not registered in the protocol.

Tavrín also stated that no one

prepared and the pilots landed on the first place that seemed suitable to them. This contradicts the statement of N. A. Noskova, a former VNOS employee: the plane was waiting for signal fires in a clearing.

Tavrin does not say anything about the shelling of the aircraft, which contradicts the data of the "Special Communication", but is quite consistent with Noskova's statement that half of the VNOS posts identified the aircraft as their own, and half as someone else's. In such a situation, air defense would hardly risk opening fire on the aircraft, fearing to shoot down their own.

In a comment to this publication in the Security Service magazine, it is reported that later Tavrin and Shilova were used for a radio game with German intelligence and the last radiogram left them on April 9, 1945. And one more thing: Lyubov Yakovlevna Shilova was allegedly called Anna Adamchik, but at the same time it is not explained why her fictitious surname is so consonant with the real name of Tavrina: Shilo.

After the end of the war, agents were kept for several years in a safe house in Moscow in the hope that someone would get in touch with them. However, the messenger never came. Tavrina-Shilo was shot on March 28, and Shilova-Adamchik on April 2, 1952.

I must say that much of what is said about Tavrina in publications that have appeared in our country looks unconvincing. For example, why did Tavrin not offer resistance to the militiaman who caught up with him in such a miraculous way, but calmly allowed himself to be detained? After all, the terrorist could not have failed to understand that since they were chasing him like that, then no most reliable documents would help and the NKVD would not release the detainees without making a request to Moscow about whether people named Tavrin were really serving in SMERSH of the 39th Army and Shilov.

Another oddity: already at the first interrogation, Tavrin testified that he was instructed to kill Stalin and that the initiative to carry out the terrorist act came from him and Zhilenkov. I don't understand why he signed his own death warrant so soon. One could introduce himself as an ordinary agent, come up with a legend: out of cowardice, he let himself be recruited and for the first time was transferred to the Soviet rear with reconnaissance and sabotage assignments. Everyone would have a chance to save their lives.

However, this legend was greatly hampered by seven pistols and the presence of the Golden Star. By the way, these seven pistols, equally indicated by all sources, are also a kind of mystery. To kill Stalin, Tavrin would have had enough of one, maximum - two trunks. Another thing is if Cookridge's version is correct: such an arsenal could be useful to Tavrin and his companion if they had to break through, say, to the landing site of the aircraft. In any case, for Tavrin, as the KGB version paints him, at worst one could say that he had to hide the weapon and the Golden Star in a cache intended for another agent. Well, what did it cost Pyotr Ivanovich and his German superiors to come up with at least some kind of legend in advance in case of failure, and not put themselves in a completely hopeless situation and - which is completely

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle spetsslu Zh63.

pointless - to give out the plan to assassinate Stalin?

But it is quite surprising that such a blatant crime, stigmatizing the sale of the Soviet fatherland, as the preparation of a terrorist attack against the leader of the party and the state, repeatedly inclined at many open and closed trials in the USSR, was not charged with Vlasov, Zhilenkov and their circle either during the investigation or at court, despite Tavrina's direct testimony to this effect.

I think I have already shown enough to the readers all the contradictions and absurdities in the "Special Communication" and the protocol of Tavrín's interrogation. I still have more confidence in Cookridge's version that Tavrín was a German intelligence officer, and not a terrorist, and because of the threat of failure, they tried, but unsuccessfully, to evacuate him by plane. It is very strange that Tavrín and Shilova, after their failure under the control of the Chekists, had such an intensive exchange with Berlin: several hundred messages were received from them in 8 months. After all, their task was not intelligence, but terror, and they had to get in touch only in rare, emergency cases. Another thing is Tavrín the scout. If, as Cookridge claims, he really operated in the Soviet rear for almost two years, then he could well have managed to send such a large number of radiograms. Pyotr Ivanovich was probably also a Hero of the Soviet Union, but, most likely, he was in fact not Tavrín, not Shilo, but a man with a completely different surname. By the way, if the genuine Golden Star, confiscated from Tavrín, really fell into the hands of the Chekists, then its number must be recorded in some documents. This means that it is possible to document to whom it was actually handed over. And this is another direction of search.

The Russian historian Nikolai Zenkovich, who had access to the archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the KGB, published his version of the failed assassination attempt on Stalin in 1998, in which Tavrín and his wife should have been involved. In general, this story differs little from Solovyov's essay and publication in the Security Service magazine, but contains several important new details that make one question the authenticity of the materials from the state security archive related to this case. Here is what, in particular, Nikolai Aleksandrovich writes:

"To this day, this operation is considered the most serious of all attempts to assassinate Stalin. The German secret services began its implementation in the summer of 1944.

The main character and executor was the former commander of a machine-gun company from the Kalinin Front, Pyotr Ivanovich Tavrín.

When he was detained and brought to Moscow to the counterintelligence department of the NKVD of the USSR, he willingly told about himself: born in 1909, a native of the village of Bobrik, Nezhinsky district of the Chernihiv region of the Ukrainian SSR, Russian, in 1942 at the front he was accepted as a candidate member of the CPSU (b), unfinished higher education. Before the war, he worked as the head of the Turin exploration party in the Urals. He was drafted into the Red Army in August 1941.

However, already a random check of the main biographical data showed that they are legendary. In fact, the arrested person had a different surname - Shilo. True, the name and patronymic coincided - Pyotr Ivanovich ...

In early December of the 43rd, Tavrín arrived in Riga, and after a couple of weeks he was introduced to his wife, the pretty Lydia Bobrik. The girl studied at the Riga radio school of the Zeppelin team.

Kind Greife presented the young with a truly royal gift -

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services?"

granted a month and a half vacation ...

Tavrín was supposed to be a major, deputy chief of counterintelligence SMERSH of the 39th army. The SD specialists produced a certificate number 298, which was no different from the Soviet counterpart.

In addition, he was to be a Hero of the Soviet Union, holder of five military orders and two medals. Usually German intelligence supplied their agents with false insignia. This time everything was real - the Gold Star of the Hero, which belonged to General Shepetov, who died in battle, the Order of Lenin, two Orders of the Red Banner, the Order of Alexander Nevsky, the Order of the Red Star, two medals "For Courage" ...

Reliable documents were also prepared for his wife. Lydia Bobrik turned into Lidia Shilova, junior lieutenant of the administrative service, secretary of the special department of the division.

Both were issued travel orders stating that they were following a call to Moscow, to the Main Directorate of Counterintelligence SMERSH of the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR.

According to these documents, the Tavrins had only to penetrate Moscow. Living in the city should have been different, for which there were blank forms of documents of the commanders of the Red Army.

Here the following circumstance is striking. According to false documents in the name of Tavrín, which Shilo used before he deserted from the Red Army, he was listed as a native of the Ukrainian village of Bobryk. And by a strange coincidence, the real name of Pyotr Ivanovich's new wife is also Bobrik. But such a surname is by no means the most common among Ukrainians or Belarusians. Well, reader, think about what is the probability that the name of Tavrín's wife coincides with the name of the village where he was allegedly born? Yes, it's just incredible. However, if this whole story is legendary, then such a coincidence can even be explained, as well as in the case of Shilo and Shilova, the real name of the agent and the imaginary name of his wife. Those who write such a legend do not have a rich imagination, and their minds are not subtle, and thoughtlessly they can make the name of one person the birthplace of another. German intelligence could not create such a legend in any way, since both the village of Bobrik and the surname Bobrik, according to Zenkovich, belonged to the real, still Soviet life of agents, even before their contacts with the Zeppelin intelligence agency. So, the legend was cooked up by the Soviet state security agencies.

The same with General Shepetov, whose Golden Star fell into the hands of the Germans and was allegedly subsequently given to Tavrín-Shilo: in fact, he did not die on the battlefield. According to the capital study of the Ukrainian historian Alexander Maslov "Dead Soviet Generals", which, unfortunately, has been published only in English so far, a general with such a surname is not listed among the Soviet commanders of the Great Patriotic War who fell in battles. And it doesn't count quite right. Because General Ivan Mikhailovich Shepetov died in

German camp for captured generals and senior officers Flossenbürg. General Shepetov was shot on May 21, 1943 for attempting to escape. Ivan Mikhailovich Shepetov, whose biography is included in the Heroes of the Soviet Union dictionary-reference book, was awarded the Gold Star of the Hero for crossing the Dnieper ... only not during the offensive in 1943, but during the retreat at the beginning of the war. In August 1941, his 96th Mountain Rifle Division heroically covered the withdrawal of the 38th Army across the Dnieper in the Nikolaev area, near the Greigovo and Zalesye stations. For these fights Ivan

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services"⁶³

Mikhailovich was so highly marked, and his division became the 14th Guards. The decree on awarding the general with the Gold Star was issued on November 9, 1941, and already in May 1942, Shepetov with his division was surrounded near Kharkov and was captured. So his Gold Star would only be to the detriment of Tavrinn if they accompanied it with a fake decree dated September 1943. The number of the Shepetov Star was too far away from the order of the numbers of the Stars of the "Dnieper heroes", which could not but catch the eye when considering. It would be easier to make a fake Gold Star, and not to interrupt the number with a fake one. And then, if at all costs they wanted to provide Tavrinn with the Shepetov award, then what was the cost of preparing a fake decree of November 1941? True, then, at the beginning of the war, there were no Heroes of the Soviet Union, and the owners of the first Gold Stars were well known in the army. About the same Shepetov in late 1941 - early 1942, before his capture, I found as many as four notes in front-line and naval newspapers and one more in Pravda and Krasnaya Zvezda. But the SMERSH officer could always refer to the fact that he was awarded in a closed manner, without publication in the press, and this would explain the absence of a newspaper clipping with the text of the decree.

An overlay with Shepetov for German intelligence was hardly possible. But if we assume that the whole story with Tavrinn the terrorist was born in the dark bowels of the State Security Committee already in the 1960s or 1970s, then such a blunder is quite understandable. Just in 1967, on the eve of the anniversary of the start of the war, in the homeland of the general, in Dneprodzerzhinsk, also near the Dnieper, a memorial plaque was opened with the following inscription: "Ivan Mikhailovich Shepetov, Major General, Hero of the Soviet Union, died in 1943. This street is named after him. It is possible that the author of the legend about Tavrinn was too lazy to check Shepetov's biographical data and decided that the general received the Hero's Star in 1943, shortly before his death, for crossing the Dnieper and that the Germans, having captured Soviet positions on the bridgehead, removed the Gold Star from the body of Ivan Mikhailovich. Another option is also possible: knowing about the death of Shepetov in captivity and that he received the title of Hero for the battles near the Dnieper, one of the Chekists immediately concluded that these were battles for crossing the river in 1943. So a fake decree regarding Tavrinn, dated September 1943, could appear.

This confusion in the story of General Shepetov leads us to the assumption that the version of Tavrinn the terrorist was unsuccessfully invented by the Soviet side. If it was necessary to invent a fiction about Shepetov's Gold Star allegedly given to Tavrinn by the Germans, then perhaps Kukridkhzh is right, and the agent under the name Tavrinn was in fact a Hero of the Soviet Union himself and acted as a German intelligence officer, and not a terrorist.

As for the documents published by the Security Service magazine, their origin can be explained in two ways. It is possible that after the arrest, Tavrín came up with a version of the assassination attempt on Stalin in order to hide his true espionage activities from the Chekists and win at least a few months of life while the Soviet authorities dealt with the preparation of an imaginary assassination attempt (maybe he hoped to escape). However, such a version required a lot of favorable coincidences for Tavrín. In fact, she could mislead only up to the arrest of the pilots from the crashed plane by the NKVD. (By the way, if Cookridge is talking about only 4 crew members, then rumors among the locals have increased this number to 17!) It is possible, of course, that

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services6\.

Tavrín agreed in advance with his German masters that in case of failure, the Arado-332 crew should show the Soviet counterintelligence that they landed, and were not going to pick up two agents. In this case, however, the question arises of how Tavrín, acting in the Soviet headquarters, was well aware of Vlasov's entourage and the latest affairs of German intelligence, even if we assume that he could appear to the Germans several times for a short time across the front line, which almost fantastic.

I think that another assumption is much more realistic: the "Special Communication" and other documents on the Tavrín case from the archives of state security came into being as a result of some kind of disinformation operation carried out by the Soviet authorities either at the very end of the war, or already in the post-war years.

It is likely that the document on the capture of Tavrín and the protocol of his interrogation were compiled by the Soviet security agencies even later, in the 1960s and 1970s, when publications about Tavrín had already appeared in the West, including Cookridge's book. Cookridge could even use some collection "for official use" with the notorious text of the message about the detention of Tavrín. The idea of falsification of materials is suggested, in particular, by the fact that the photograph in which Tavrín is depicted with Greife is, of course, fake. This conjecture was first confirmed by my good friend director Leonid Georgievich Maryagin, a man well-versed in cinema and photomontage. He reasonably pointed out that the shadows in the photograph do not fall as they should, given where the light comes from.

Let me remind you: for the first time this photograph was reproduced in 1971 during the publication of Solovyov's article and repeated at a much higher printing level in 1993 in the Security Service magazine. Someone really needed to edit this photo to show Tavrín in the uniform of a Soviet officer and with the Golden Star of a Hero next to a German intelligence officer. And with the same success, this "someone" from among by no means ordinary KGB officers could fabricate suitable materials confirming the version of Tavrín the terrorist.

And none of the writers asked an elementary question: how could a photograph of Tavrín with Greife be in the KGB archives? Pyotr Ivanovich himself, perhaps, grabbed it for a "long memory" when he flew to the Soviet rear?

Another version is not excluded: the whole history of Tavrín as a failed

Stalin's Killer was written shortly after the publication of Schellenberg's memoirs in the 1950s, which described the preparations for an assassination attempt on the Soviet leader in the fall of 1944. In this case, there is a suspicion that such an attempt was never actually prepared and we are dealing with the fiction of the chief of German intelligence, in order to give his memoirs a special sensationalism.

Or maybe in the early 1970s, the Soviet security agencies decided "once and for all" to refute the story of Tavrín as an outstanding German agent who had been operating in the Soviet rear for almost two years? After all, this story hit hard on the prestige of the Chekists. In addition, if Tavrín really was a Hero of the Soviet Union, it also hit the myth that only scoundrels and cowards went to serve the Germans. And then there was the opportunity to link "Tavrín the terrorist" with Schellenberg's well-known message about an assassination attempt on Stalin. Then the Golden Star of the Hero from the agent (the real one - about this in all publications) found its supposedly convincing explanation: the high *nafta* was given to Tavrín so that he

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services"⁶⁵

it was easier to get into the solemn reception at the Kremlin on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution. At the same time, it was deliberately overlooked that the Gold Star of a SMERSH officer is too striking, especially for a patrol. But after three decades, few people delved into such subtleties, and in the West it has always been a Chinese letter, so the KGB in the 1970s was very simple, and how profitable it was to present Tavrín-Shilo, known to us today, as a pseudo-hero.

The history of Tavrín in the KGB presentation could feed the myth of the omnipotence of the Soviet counterintelligence during the Great Patriotic War and the absence of the Germans in any serious, successfully operating agents in the USSR. It was considered certain, and the people believed - almost all German spies were either quickly exposed or acted under the control of SMERSH.

Sometimes Tavrín and his wife are identified with the two captured Soviet officers mentioned by Schellenberg, who agreed to carry out an assassination attempt on Stalin. So, for example, Fedor Razzakov in the book "The Age of Terror", published in 1997, using the publication in the journal "Security Service", citing Schellenberg's memoirs, comes to the conclusion that the story of Tavrín reflects the details of the operation conceived by Schellenberg. However, there are too many absurdities here, which are difficult to explain only by the fact that the head of German intelligence could fail her memory. It turns out, find, as much as you can, the differences between the two pictures drawn by Schellenberg and the KGB.

First of all, Schellenberg's agents are men, officers of the Red Army. According to the KGB version, a man and a woman were going to kill Stalin, while if Tavrín was really a military man, commander of the Red Army before he was captured, then nothing is said about Shilova's military service in the past in the KGB documents. During interrogation, Tavrín named his wife's former profession: an accountant.

The chief of German intelligence writes that the terrorists were landed from the plane in the vicinity of Moscow and had to get to the capital under

view of a patrol in a police car. According to the version of the Soviet state security agencies, Tavrín and Shilova landed quite far from Moscow, in the Smolensk region, and traveled on a German motorcycle under the guise of SMERSH officers. It is completely incomprehensible, absurd, why the agents were given the latest powerful German motorcycle, which was probably a curiosity in the Red Army, if at all ours managed to capture it as a trophy. This "Tsundap" would immediately attract the attention of the patrol.

Further, Schellenberg writes that the plane with the agents landed safely. The plane with Tavrín and the radio operator, as we remember, crashed during landing. Schellenberg's agents were supposed to carry out an assassination attempt with the help of a special, newly invented explosive clay, which they were going to discreetly stick, like a lump of dirt, to Stalin's car with the assistance of a government garage mechanic familiar to one of the agents. The attack was planned to be carried out during Stalin's trip to Moscow or at his dacha near Moscow. Among the items confiscated from Tavrín during his arrest, there is no explosive clay. And Pyotr Ivanovich himself did not speak about such an intricate method of assassination during interrogation. He spoke about a different version of the attack: a shot from an armor-piercing grenade launcher at the leader's car, but this is an extreme case, and the main plan was to assassinate Stalin during a ceremonial meeting (dedicated to the anniversary of the October Revolution), and here, rather

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special #66

of all, he would really need a Gold Hero Star...

During the investigation, Tavrín testified that he had to act alone and had no accomplices in Moscow.

Schellenberg writes that preparations for the assassination of Stalin began only in mid-1944. According to Tavrín's testimony, preparations for the assassination attempt had been in full swing since September 1943.

Finally, Schellenberg's agents (if, of course, they existed in reality, and not in the imagination of the memoirist) disappeared after landing and never got in touch with him. And Tavrín and Shilova, according to state security, after their arrest, conducted a successful disinformation radio game with the Germans for eight months.

There is another, almost fantastic version about Tavrín. The Germans sent him and Shilova to our rear in the expectation that they would either immediately turn themselves in to the NKVD with a confession, or they would be captured very quickly and immediately lay out that they had been sent to kill Stalin, which would divert the attention of the departure authorities of the actual assassination. In this case, Schellenberg could well use Tavrín "in the dark", but it is possible that Pyotr Ivanovich, being a staunch enemy of the Soviet regime, was ready to sacrifice his life in the name of destroying the tyrant.

The Tavrín's testimonies point to the option according to which Stalin was to be shot during the ceremonial meeting. Here the physical evidence is suitable: seven pistols With poisoned bullets. An assassination attempt during Stalin's movement around the city or its environs required a hand grenade launcher ...

It seems that the attention of the NKVD was stubbornly diverted from the option with

using min. Real terrorists, taking advantage of the fact that after the capture of the plane and Tavrín, the enemy relaxed, landed safely near Moscow and began to prepare an assassination attempt on the route of Stalin's car. The police uniform and car easily allowed them to pass for a highway patrol. It was necessary to lay a mine either in Stalin's car, or on the route of Stalin's trips. The radio game of the surrendered Tavrín made it clear to the Germans that the Soviets had taken the bait.

I admit that Schellenberg was unfair to our two officers: they made an attempt to carry out their plan, but to no avail.

In an interview with Komsomolskaya Pravda, Mikhail Stepanovich Dokuchaev, the former deputy head of the now also former Ninth Directorate of the KGB, which was in charge of government security, on May 21, 1994, said the following: committed right on Red Square against People's Commissar and member of the State Defense Committee Mikoyan. The terrorist studied the security system in the area of Kuibyshev Street (now Ilyinka) for a long time and found a weak spot. On that day, he appeared on Red Square and introduced himself to the guards as having been sent for reinforcement on the eve of the holiday (probably, the unknown person was in a police uniform, since he did not arouse suspicion in the guards. - B.S.). Then he made his way to the Execution Ground, and when the car with Mikoyan appeared from the Spassky Gates, he opened fire. The car was armored and no one was hurt. The driver, quickly orienting himself, turned onto Vasilyevsky Spusk. A shootout ensued between the terrorist and the guards. As a result of a grenade explosion, he was mortally wounded and did not have time to tell anything.

Here it should be noted that in the memoirs of M. S. Dokuchaev this is told differently. The assassination attempt on Mikoyan took place on Krasnaya

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services

square on November 6, but not in 1944, but in 1942. The name of the shooter is given: Savely Dmitriev, who deserted from the Red Army. The terrorist did not die in a fight with the guards, but was arrested, tried and subsequently shot.

The son of L.P. Beria Sergo writes about the same attempt in 1942 in his memoirs in the book "My father is Lavrenty Beria", published in 1994. He named the date of the execution of Dmitriev: August 25, 1950. Here is what Sergo Lavrentievich reports about the Dmitriev case:

"At the end of the forty-second year, the deserter Savely Dmitriev fired several shots on Red Square at a car that had left the Spassky Gates of the Kremlin. The ambush was set up at the Execution Ground. It was Mikoyan's car. No one was hurt then, and the terrorist was immediately thrown by the guards with gas grenades. Dmitriev himself testified during the investigation that he was preparing an attempt on Stalin's life. Father believed that the former Red Army soldier Dmitriev may have considered himself a victim of Soviet power, but other motives still dominated - the deserter Dmitriev certainly had mental deviations.

Judging by the story of the son of Lavrenty Beria, Savely Dmitriev was a typical lone terrorist who had hatred for the Soviet

power, the main embodiment of which in his eyes was Stalin, was combined with mental imbalance. It is only unclear what the security officers waited for 8 years before executing him. The coincidence of the day, the object, and some details of the assassination tend to think that when Dokuchaev's interview was published in Komsomolskaya Pravda, a typo simply crept in: instead of 1942 - 1944. However, the identity of the terrorist and his fate in different publications are presented in completely different ways, so we can talk about two different assassination attempts, even if this is unlikely.

In any case, Savely Dmitriev remains the only person who attempted on Stalin, and his existence in history has been documented. In the book of military lawyers A. I. Muranov and V. E. Zvyagintsev "Dossier on the Marshal", published in 1996, the "Reference of cases considered by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR in the period from 24 to August 30, 1950". There, at number 15, it says: "St. Dmitriev, corporal of the 1st anti-aircraft machine-gun air defense regiment of the Moscow Front. On November 6, 1942, he fired at a car."

If we assume that in the interview and the book Dokuchaev did talk about different assassination attempts, then we can assume that on November 6, 1944, the assassination attempt was made by one of the two officers sent by Schellenberg. Probably, upon arrival in Moscow, even if they managed to find a mechanic friend, they were convinced that the plan with "clay-explosives" was not feasible. Stalin's cortege always consisted of several cars, and until the very last minute it was never known which car he would go in. In addition, the itineraries of the trips were kept in the strictest confidence, and with tight control, it was unlikely that even the mechanic of the government garage had any opportunity to attach explosives to the limousine. Therefore, the terrorists were forced to take a simpler, but less reliable path. They reconnoitered the security system on Red Square and, possibly having received information from the mechanic about when Stalin should leave the Kremlin, they decided to set up an ambush. The police uniform helped one of the terrorists to deceive the guards and take a position near the Execution Ground. However, instead of Stalin, Mikoyan ended up in the car. It is possible that Joseph Vissarionovich in general, for the purpose of personal security, had

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁸

the habit of letting Anastas Ivanovich in front of him, hoping that Mikoyan at a distance in a rapidly moving car would be mistaken for him, Stalin. The terrorist died in a battle with the guards, and who he is remains unknown. And the second agent, of course, did not dare to repeat such an attempt, or, perhaps, by that time he had already been arrested.

What motivated the officers who tried to kill Stalin? It is possible that they really were repressed in the 1930s, as Schellenberg reports, and sincerely hated the dictator, the Soviet system and hoped to change the life of the people by eliminating Stalin. According to Schellenberg, the officers made their startling offer only in the middle of 1944, when the outcome of the war was already quite clear to everyone in the world. Then the death of the leader could not lead our country to defeat and capture. Obviously, the consciousness of this prompted the officers to go for the implementation of their long-planned plans. They treated Russia, its present and future like many white emigrants who loved their homeland and hated the Bolsheviks.

The Russian-born French artist Konstantin Kluge, in his book *The Salt of the Earth*, recalls how his father, a White Army colonel who fought alongside Admiral Kolchak and Baron Ungern, reacted to Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union:

"... Somehow, early in the morning, my father came to us (it was in Shanghai. - B.S.). He was very excited about something. He entered without saying hello, sat down at the table, was silent for a while and somehow strangely croaked: "We were attacked! These bastards crossed our border. I just heard on the radio. But remember: they will not defeat us, our people, our army will destroy them, and this will be the end of Hitler!"

I didn't believe my ears. Two startling events struck me: the German attack on Russia and the sudden, unthinkable change in my father's attitude towards his homeland.

"Are you saying that we were attacked and OUR army will win?!"

He slammed his hand on the table with force, silencing me. "Now is not the time for irony. Today there are neither Reds nor Whites, but only Russians who will not give up the country of their ancestors!"...

"What to do? What can be done?! he repeated in despair. I have never admired my father so much as I did this morning. Twenty years of criticism and ridicule about Soviet Russia, its masters and its army disappeared as soon as his country, its independence, was threatened. Behind my father, I saw millions of Russians rising with the same determination to defend their

earth.

From that day on, we lived on radio messages from Vladivostok and newspaper reports that reached Russia ...

Portraits of marshals of the Red Army are pinned to the walls of my father's apartment. They were cut out by him from Pravda into a quarter of a newspaper sheet. And in the center hangs - in full sheet - Generalissimo Stalin! (Anachronism: Stalin was not yet a generalissimo during the war. - B.S.) Seeing my amazement, he objects: "I know that this is a scoundrel, but today he, and no one else, commands our entire army - this must be understood" .

However, the mood of the old colonel changed decisively as soon as the army of Paulus capitulated in Stalingrad and a radical change in favor of the allies appeared in the hostilities: "The outcome of the war became clear to the whole world. We all rejoiced. Everyone... except my father.

As soon as the battle for Stalingrad ended, my father removed from the wall

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁹

portraits of the marshals and stopped talking about military operations, only grumbling: "It is not surprising that the Germans are beaten, their front and communications are unacceptably stretched. In such conditions, even these generals, who were not worth the non-commissioned officers of the tsarist time, could freely control the battles. And we must not forget that the Bolsheviks are still sitting in Moscow."

As in a fairy tale, yesterday's warrior again turned into a grumbling emigrant.

I think that the spirit of the defender of his land, hidden in him for a quarter of a century, silenced the accumulated anger towards the Soviet government as soon as the independence of his fatherland was threatened. Alas, the good rebirth lasted only as long as the very danger of defeat existed.

It is clear that our terrorists during the days of the Battle of Moscow, when the fate of the country seemed to hang in the balance, did not hang portraits of Stalin in their dugouts (unless on instructions from their superiors). But there can be no doubt that he was considered a bastard, and rightly so, and the implementation of their action was postponed until the time when the threat looming over Russia had passed. Of course, they did not know that at that time the assassination of Stalin was not feasible. Nua Hitler would not have been saved anyway, because the whole sane world was interested in removing him from the political arena. In general, a terrorist attack against Stalin, if only the dictator's inner circle had not been organized, was doomed to failure from the very beginning: too dense a ring of guards surrounded "Uncle Joe"...

HUNTING FOR HITLER: SOVIET AGENTS AND GERMAN CONSPIRACERS

Did Soviet intelligence have plans to assassinate Hitler? According to Sudoplatov, there were. Here is what he writes about this in his memoirs: "We created one autonomous group, which was supposed to destroy Hitler and his entourage if they appeared in Moscow after its capture. This operation was entrusted to the composer Knipper, brother of Olga Chekhova, and his wife Marina Garikovna. But since the Germans did not take Moscow in the fall of 1941, this plan was dropped.

According to another plan to assassinate the Fuhrer, as Pavel Anatolyevich recalls, a group of terrorists led by Igor Miklashevsky was sent to Berlin in 1943 to contact people from Hitler's entourage. In the memoirs of Sudoplatov we read about this:

"The famous actress Olga Chekhova, the ex-wife of the famous writer's nephew, was close to Radziwill (the Polish prince, whom the NKVD considered his "agent of influence." - B.S.) and to Goering and through relatives in Transcaucasia is connected with Beria. She maintained regular contacts with the NKVD. Initially, it was supposed to be used precisely for communication with Radziwill. We had a plan to assassinate Hitler, according to which Radziwill and Olga Chekhova, with the help of their friends among the German aristocracy, were to provide our people with access to Hitler. A group of agents abandoned in Germany and underground in Berlin was completely subordinate to the militant Igor Miklashevsky, who arrived in Germany at the beginning of 1942.

The former boxing champion Miklashevsky, acting as a Soviet defector, gained considerable popularity in Berlin after his fight with the German boxing champion Max Schmeling in 1942 or 1943, from which he emerged victorious. Miklashevsky remained in

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret fight special service*60

Berlin until 1944.

Miklashevsky's uncle fled the Soviet Union at the beginning of the war and became one of the active members of the German anti-Bolshevik committee for the liberation of the USSR. He proudly received his nephew, giving him every support as a political opponent of Soviet power. In 1942, Miklashevsky managed to meet Olga Chekhova at one of the receptions. He conveyed to Moscow that Goering could be removed easily, but the Kremlin showed little interest in this. In 1943, Stalin abandoned his original plan to assassinate Hitler because he was afraid that once Hitler was eliminated, Nazi circles and the military would try to conclude a separate peace treaty with the Allies without the participation of the Soviet Union ...

Miklashevsky fled to France in 1944 after the liquidation of his uncle. In France, he remained for two years after the end of the war, tracking down the Vlasovites who had fled to the West - the remnants of the army of the traitor Lieutenant General Vlasov. In 1947, Miklashevsky returned to the Soviet Union, was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and resumed his boxing career, which he remained faithful to until entering the

retirement."

Alas, it is no longer possible to check whether Sudoplatov's message is true. Documents with plans to assassinate Hitler, if they exist, have not yet been published. The fate of Igor Miklashevsky's uncle, the famous actor Vsevolod Blumenthal-Tamarin, one of General Vlasov's associates, is also unknown. Traces of him are lost in Prague in November 1944, where Vsevolod Aleksandrovich was present at the creation of the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia. Since by that time Miklashevsky was already in France, he, therefore, did not kill his uncle. Whether Blumenthal-Tamarin died from someone's bullet or later died of his own death in any of the camps for displaced persons in the western zones of occupation of Germany or Austria, I do not know. But there was no Blumenthal-Tamarin among the forcibly repatriated Vlasovites

- this is known for sure.

Whether or not his nephew was going to kill Hitler is still a mystery. Judging by the story of Sudoplatov, Miklashevsky could well have been sent to Germany in order to infiltrate Vlasov's entourage and notify the NKVD of his activities. Moreover, the question was whether Olga Chekhova had anything to do with Soviet intelligence. In her memoirs, she does not write anything about connections with the people of Sudoplatov and Beria. But the son of Lavrenty Pavlovich mentions Olga Chekhova in his memoirs as a deeply secret agent of Soviet intelligence. Sergo Lavrentievich, in particular, writes: "I know who recruited her and on what grounds this was done, but I don't consider myself entitled to talk about such details from the biography of the intelligence officer." It is not possible to verify this assertion.

The time indicated by Sudoplatov for the transfer of the terrorist agent to Berlin is also doubtful - the beginning of 1942. The fact is that in 1942 Blumenthal-Tamarin was not in Berlin, but in occupied Kiev, where, as the artistic director of the Russian Drama Theater, together with S. E. Radlov, he staged Alexander Korneichuk's play The Front, in which he played the role of a general Gorlov. The performance was subtitled "This is how they fight..." and was an evil satire on the Soviet government and the Red Army. Two explanations are possible here: either Igor Miklashevsky "fell" to the Germans only in 1943, when after

Stalingrad, according to Sudo-Platov, Stalin decided not to "wet" the Fuhrer,

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle spetsslu Zh63.

believing to take him alive; or he "fled" to Germany really in 1942, but appeared in Berlin later.

In any case, Miklashevsky had no chance to carry out an attempt on Hitler. Unlike the officers and generals - participants in the July 20 plot - he had no opportunity to be near Hitler during meetings, and even more so in person. Even the Fuhrer never accepted Vlasov. What can we say about some defector, albeit an excellent boxer, a friend of Max Schmeling himself, so lauded by Nazi propaganda. There was absolutely no way for Soviet intelligence to get a German agent, who was in Hitler's inner circle, as an agent. An artist like Lieutenant Paul Siebert-Kuznetsov was no good here: the Gestapo carefully checked everyone who wanted to make contact with the head of state.

The Fuhrer's security at public events was so tight that even an attempt by a whole group of well-trained terrorists was excluded. Hitler's head of security, SS Gruppenfuehrer and Police Lieutenant General Hans Rattenhuber, during interrogation at SMERSH on November 28, 1945, in particular, testified about the Fuhrer's security in theaters:

"... bodyguards guarded the approaches to Hitler's box and controlled neighboring boxes. Hitler usually entered the box unnoticed by the public shortly after the start of the performance. There were permanent places for the police in order to control and monitor the public as clearly as possible. These places were chosen on both sides of the box and above it.

When Hitler drove out of the theater, additional protection from the local police was required.

Broader security measures were taken during official speeches. Places around Hitler and in the well-known security sector were given only to persons on special lists. Patrols watched all the premises of the theater, right down to the dressing rooms.

Rattenhuber also described security measures during the annual Wagner opera festivals:

"The eight-day festivities in Bayreuth required increased security. All hotels, restaurants, and especially the hall itself, where the festival took place, were subjected to control. All invited spectators were carefully checked by the secret police a few months before the festivities.

Certain places were reserved for members of the secret police. The sector in front of Hitler's box was under the control of personal guards, who, without Hitler's permission, did not allow anyone to the box.

Hitler during these festivities usually lived in Bayreuth with Wagner's widow, Mrs. Winifred Wagner, in whose house there were concerts with the participation of the best artists. In the areas adjacent to Bayreuth and on the roads, control of all residents and visitors was periodically carried out.

Even more difficult was the situation of potential terrorists during meetings and rallies. Rattenhuber testified:

"Places of meetings were already under protection 8 days before the start. All premises were checked, fire extinguishers were to be removed (so that, God forbid, a bomb was not placed there. - B.S.). Ceilings were carefully examined. Special police dogs guarded all approaches to knowledge. The patrol service operated around the clock.

2-3 days before the meeting, I personally checked the state of the security measures taken. The Gestapo and the regional leadership of the NSDAP informed me of the measures they had taken.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services?"

24 hours before the start of the meeting, the entire building was thoroughly inspected again and filled with security. Since that time, access was allowed only with special passes ...

I should also note that after the assassination attempt on Hitler in Munich on November 9, 1939 (then an explosion in the Bürgerbräukeller beer hall, where a solemn meeting was held on the occasion of the anniversary of the Nazi "beer putsch" - 23 years, was arranged by a lone terrorist carpenter Georg Elser; Hitler left hall half an hour before the explosion. - B.S.), the guards began to widely use microphones for eavesdropping, which a few days before Hitler's arrival were installed between the chairs in the halls where his speeches were scheduled.

There was no chance to kill Hitler during a walk, because, according to Rattenhuber, since the beginning of World War II, the Fuhrer "no longer walked on foot and walked only in his specially fenced and well-guarded park in Berchtesgaden."

Hitler's trips, even official ones, when the route was known in advance, also left the terrorists no hope of success. Here is what the former chief of the Fuhrer's personal guard showed during interrogation:

"In a few days, officials of the criminal police took the entire route under surveillance. House owners were instructed not to let unknown persons into their houses under any circumstances. All garages and auto repair shops pro-. looked in order to detect foreign cars there. Kiosks and hollow columns for posters were taken under special supervision.

The device of loudspeakers was allowed only to a special team of attack aircraft. The hanging of slogans, the decoration and construction of the tribune were carried out under the supervision of employees of the regional leadership of the NSDAP. For photojournalists and cameramen, special places were allotted, which were carefully monitored.

If on the way it was necessary to pass the park, then in this case there were always police officials with dogs in it.

On the day of the rally, the streets were guarded by paramilitary formations of the NSDAP and the police. To prevent the throwing of flowers, they were taken from the public and then brought to Hitler. Persons with luggage off the streets immediately

removed.

The cordon was arranged in such a way that every second guard stood facing the public, and police officials were placed among the public and in the back rows.

Particular care was needed when cornering due to the slowing down of the ride.

All these measures were absolutely necessary, since Hitler was standing in a car that was moving almost at a pace. The letters were handed over only to the guards, who were driving in two cars close to Hitler's car.

It is worth adding to this that in the large and dense crowd that stood along the highway, it was very difficult for the terrorist to pull out a pistol and make an aimed shot.

The only attempt on Hitler, which almost failed, happened only because Hitler trusted the high-ranking officers of the Wehrmacht too much and did not allow them to be searched at the entrance to his headquarters. Rattenhuber in the NKVD during interrogation said:

"In 1943, I received two messages from the Imperial Main Security Office, one from Spain and the other from Sweden. These reports indicated that the officers of the German army were preparing the assassination of Hitler, but the specific names of these military men

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶³

conspirators were not mentioned.

Both of these messages I reported to General Schmidt and Reichsleiter Bormann, who had a conversation with Hitler on this subject.

As Schmidt told me, Hitler considered these reports to be a fabrication without any foundation.

Therefore, Hitler did not allow me to search the headquarters officers.

After that, I repeatedly drew the attention of General Schmidt to a serious threat of assassination, since there was a full opportunity to bring explosives into the headquarters, but he also did not react to these statements of mine.

Rattenhuber looked into the water, as if foreseeing the events of July 20, 1944. At the time of the assassination attempt, the head of security, fortunately for him, was in the hospital and was not injured either by the Stauffenberg bomb or in the service. He said: "When Professor Hasselbach told me what had happened, I immediately suspected that someone had brought explosives to the meeting of the military council. This is how it really happened."

It remains to be added that after the assassination attempt, the Gestapo Special Commission, which investigated the circumstances of the incident, did not find any negligence or even slight negligence in Rattenhuber's actions - the head of the guard could not answer that the Fuhrer trusted his associates too much. Since then, all the Fuhrers who came to headquarters have become

search. An exception was made only for Goering, Himmler and some of his other associates - the top leaders of the party and state.

But Stalin never trusted his marshals and generals and, as you know, executed them or imprisoned them so that they would not have time to plot against his person. Before the war, he executed marshals Tukhachevsky, Yegorov and Blucher, and after the war - marshals Novikov and Kulik. And Iosif Vissarionovich had a security system - a mosquito will not undermine his nose!

Let us recall how Siebert-Kuznetsov, even having obtained an appointment with Gauleiter Koch (in our opinion, the secretary of the regional party committee. - B.S.) and having poisoned bullets in his pocket, could not carry out a terrorist attack. And to kill Hitler or Stalin from an ordinary agent, be it Miklashevsky or Tavrín, there was absolutely no possibility. Only a miracle, a happy accident, could help here. But not a single intelligence agency, when planning the elimination of a political figure, is inclined to rely on chance.

Or maybe the Soviet intelligence still had agents in the Führer's very close circle? Statements of this kind are contained in the memoirs of the surviving heads of the German intelligence services, Walter Schellenberg and Reinhard Gehlen. Can they be trusted? Let us conclude by analyzing this evidence in detail.

THE MYSTERY OF THE "RED CHAPEL"

Schellenberg argued that the Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, who headed the party chancellery, and the head of the Gestapo, Heinrich Müller, were to some extent Soviet agents. Here is what he wrote about this in the American version of his memoirs:

"Bormann, who was constantly present in Hitler's entourage, became an indispensable person precisely because of this constancy. Everything that had to do with Hitler passed through Bormann. He was at the decision of all questions, big and small; whatever Hitler was experiencing: excitement, furious anger or a breakdown - Bormann was inevitably a witness to this. From

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret fight specials" 64.

Bormann even depended on how to direct these emotions of Hitler into the mainstream of his daily life. Bormann could deftly find the word needed to change the unpleasant topic of conversation and direct the Führer's attention to a new object - in short, he knew how to dispel his fears. He had an excellent memory and an unbending will, which was especially valuable for Hitler, especially in recent years, since the more absolutist the regime became, the more difficult it was to coordinate the activities of a huge military machine with the orders of the Führer. The more tense his nerves were, the more soothing was the constant presence of Bormann, a man with a firm and unyielding character, who turned out to be near at any time of the day or night (reading Schellenberg, one might think that the Führer was a weak-willed, gentle person, but then, interestingly, did he succeed in capturing the 80 million German people with him and authorizing the extermination of millions and millions of innocent people? - B.S.). Bormann had the ability

to capture the essence of the issue, to present it in an accessible and intelligible form, and to summarize the main problems in the form of several clear statements. He did it so skillfully that, even listening to his shortest report, one could understand what kind of solution he was seeking. I have seen many examples of this...

I once talked about Bormann's personal qualities with Himmler, who confirmed the correctness of my assessment. "The Führer is so accustomed to Bormann," he said, "that it would be extremely difficult to reduce his influence. I tried many times to negotiate with him, although in fact it is my duty to get him removed. I hope that I can outwit him, and in such a way that there is no need to get rid of him. He is responsible for many of the Führer's wrong steps; he not only agreed that the Führer should be uncompromising in his decisions, but actively contributed to this.

Throughout his life, Bormann methodically consolidated his won positions. He had once been an estate manager in Mecklenburg; then became a saboteur and participated in the movement against the French during the occupation of the Ruhr; he was also a member of the "black", i.e. illegal, Reichswehr. He joined the National Socialist Party early in its existence and made a career under the auspices of Hess, whose place he took and used to increase his political power on a scale Hess never dreamed of. In 1945, sensibly assessing the general situation and taking into account the danger associated with his position, he made a decisive attempt to move to the eastern camp.

The second representative of the leading circles, who had a clear inclination towards Russia, was Müller. Serious suspicions about the sincerity of his work against Russia first arose in the spring of 1943 after the end of a meeting of police attachés in foreign states. Müller, with whom my relationship was becoming increasingly hostile, was emphatically correct and polite that evening. I thought that it was already almost night and he had had enough time to get drunk, but suddenly he said that he would like to talk to me.

The conversation went about the "Red Chapel". He was very persistent in trying to find out the reasons behind the facts of treason, and he wanted to get an idea of the way of thinking on the basis of which such treason became possible.

"I believe," I said, that you must admit that Soviet influence in

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁵

countries of Western Europe has found distribution not only among the working class; it won adherents among educated people as well. I regard this as an inevitable historical phenomenon of our era, especially if we take into account the spiritual anarchy of Western culture, in which I include the ideology of the Third Reich. National Socialism is nothing more than a heap of garbage against the backdrop of a bleak spiritual desert. In contrast, a unified and completely uncompromising spiritual and biological force is developing in Russia. The goal of the communists, which is to carry out a general spiritual and material world revolution, is a kind of

positive charge as opposed to Western negation."

I spent that night in front of Muller, deep in thought. Before me sat a man who fought against communism in all its various forms, a man who, in the course of the investigation of the Red Chapel case, made every effort to uncover the most remote branches of the conspiracy. What a change now!

Suddenly he declared: "You know, Schellenberg, the fact that there are misunderstandings between us is simply stupid. At first, I thought that we would be able to discard these misunderstandings in the course of our personal and professional contacts, but this did not work out. Compared to me, you have a number of advantages. I'm from the bottom: my parents were poor. I was a police detective, started with round-ups and went through the harsh school of everyday police work. And you are an educated person, a lawyer, you were brought up in a cultural family, you traveled. In other words, you are firmly connected to the ossified system of conservative traditions. I'm not talking now about the German people - they still remain loyal, persistent and brave - and not about the heroism of our soldiers at the front. I'm talking about the intelligentsia strata of society and their extremely confusing ideas about spiritual values. National Socialism has never been promising for them and has not been able to change them. If we are destined to lose this war, it will not be a lack of military capability; the cause will be the spiritual incapacity of our leaders. We don't have real leaders. True, we have our leader - the Fuhrer, but everything is closed on him. Let us take the crowd under his direct control. Who will you find there? They spend days and nights in continuous quarrels: some seek to enlist the Fuhrer's favor, others want to secure power for themselves. Undoubtedly, the Fuhrer has seen this for a long time, but, guided by considerations that are completely incomprehensible to me, apparently he prefers this very order of things in order to rule. This is where its main drawback lies. As much as I would like to think otherwise, I am more and more inclined to the conclusion that Stalin knows how to do these things better. Just think what his system has had to endure over the past two years, and what authority he enjoys in the eyes of the people. Stalin appears to me now in a completely different light. He is unimaginably superior to all the leaders of the Western powers, and if I were allowed to speak on this issue, we would conclude an agreement with him in the shortest possible time. It would be a blow to the West, infected with the accursed hypocrisy, from which it could never recover. You see, when speaking with Russians, it is always clear how things are: either they will take off your head, or they will start hugging you. And this Western garbage dump talks all about God and other sublime matters, but can starve out an entire nation if it comes to the conclusion that this is in its interests. Germany would have achieved much greater success if the Fuehrer

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special #66

succeeded in getting to the heart of the matter. But with us everything is conceived and carried out half-heartedly, and if we are not careful, this will ruin us. Himmler shows firmness only in those cases when he feels the support of the Fuhrer. If this were not the case, he would not have been able to decide which course to follow. Heydrich far surpassed him in this respect; The Fuhrer was right when he called him "the man with the iron heart." Bormann knows what he wants, but he is too small a person to think like a statesman.

Look at him and Himmler - after all, these are two snakes grappling. It will be difficult for Himmler to climb up."

When I heard Muller express such views, I was astonished. After all, he always said that Bormann was nothing but a criminal; to what was the sudden change in attitude towards him to be attributed? I was nervous trying to figure out what Mueller needed. Does he want to trap me? Drinking one glass of cognac after another, he let loose such expressions about the rotten West and our leaders - Goering, Goebbels, Ribbentrop and Ley, that they probably felt very bad at that moment. Müller was a living card file, he knew all the most intimate episodes of the life of each of them, and therefore he told me a number of amusing details. But everything was overshadowed by a feeling of unease that did not leave me. What did this man achieve, who was overwhelmed with bitterness and resentment, who so suddenly began to open his soul to me? No one had heard such things from Muller before. In order to direct the conversation in a different direction, I stated in a nonchalant and jocular tone:

- Excellent, Mr. Muller. Let's start saying "Heil Stalin" right away, and our little dad Muller will become the head of the NKVD.

He looked at me, a sinister grin in his eyes.

"That would be excellent," he replied in a contemptuous tone, his Bavarian accent deepening. "Then you and your die-hard bourgeois friends would have to hang on the gallows.

The strange conversation ended, but I still did not understand what Muller was striving for. This became clear a few months later. Our conversation took place just at the time when Muller became an ideological shifter. He no longer believed in the victory of Germany and considered the only possible way out of the situation the conclusion of peace with Russia. This was in full accordance with his mode of action. As far as one could judge from them, his conception of the relationship between the state and the individual was from the very beginning neither German nor National Socialist, but in fact was communist. Who knows how many people then, under his influence, went over to the eastern camp?

Müller knew full well that he had failed to impress me. The truce we made for one evening is over. Subsequently, because of his hostile attitude, I wasted a lot of nerves and strength. There was a kind of duel between us in the dark, and the advantage was on his side. His animosity grew especially strong from the end of 1943, when he made contact with the Russian secret service, and I had to reckon with more than just his personal dislike: I was the object of the fanatic's hatred.

In 1945 he joined the Communists, and in 1950 a German officer who had returned from Russian captivity told me that in 1948 he had seen Müller in Moscow. Muller died shortly after that meeting."

Yes, Gestapo chief Muller, who works for the NKVD and sympathizes

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the special services

"Eastern camp", Hitler's executor Bormann - this is not the mysterious Olga Chekhova and the militant boxer - "defector" Igor Miklashevsky. Such people, if desired, could organize an assassination attempt on Hitler much better than Stauffenberg, and arrange a coup d'état to make the Third Reich an ally of the Soviet Union. Yes, and information relating to the general strategy of the war and Hitler's plans, the chief of the Gestapo and especially the head of the party chancellery, who was close to Hitler and held in his hands all the threads of control, could supply the Soviets in abundance. But here's the problem: since the end of 1943, after the arrest of the Sandor Rado group in Switzerland, no information of a strategic nature from sources in Germany has been received by Moscow. In any case, information of this kind had no effect on the planning of the main operations of the Red Army in the last two years of the war.

In Schellenberg's message, it is also very alarming that Heinrich Muller, who was not distinguished by excessive education and intellect and was not noticed by his contemporaries in a penchant for philosophizing, in the "Labyrinth" appears as a real philosopher, putting forward an original concept of the superiority of communism over national socialism. It seems that here, under the mask of Muller's character in Schellenberg's memoirs, Schellenberg himself speaks, a very educated person. In such a Jesuit way, the former head of foreign intelligence of the National Socialist Party, perhaps, undertook to explain to the West the reasons for Russia's victory in World War II.

Gehlen, probably under the impression of Schellenberg's book, in his memoirs developed a version about Bormann - a Soviet agent. He began from afar - from his conversations with the head of the Abwehr, Admiral Canaris:

"... Our conversation took on a very lively character after Canaris, with obvious indignation, mentioned the task he had received from Hitler to kill Churchill. He declined this assignment, just as some time before he ignored the order to find the fleeing French General Giraud and "kill him on the spot." In this regard, it should be mentioned that Canaris strongly rejected political assassinations. His deep religious conviction absolutely forbade him from even thinking of such a possibility. To this, I can add with complete certainty that the second department of his administration, whose task was sabotage or sabotage - in contrast to the Soviet KGB and its methods - disabled only militarily important objects in the enemy rear. Directives to eliminate individual prominent figures of the enemy were strongly rejected by Canaris, even if they came from the political leadership of Germany.

In one of the detailed conversations, the admiral and I came to the conclusion: the Soviets, apparently, have a source of information well versed in the situation in the highest echelon of power in our country. More than once, independently of each other, we were convinced that after a very short period of time the decisions taken by the German leadership at the highest level, down to the smallest detail, became the property of the enemy.

Here I want to break my long silence and tell you about a secret carefully hidden by the Soviets, which may become the key to understanding one of the most amazing and mysterious stories of our century. We are talking about the fatal role played by the closest associates of Hitler's confidant - Martin Bormann during the war and the first post-war years. He was the main source of information and

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁸

adviser to the Soviets, having started working for Moscow even before the Russian campaign.

Canaris and I - each in our own way - established the following indisputable fact: Bormann had the only uncontrolled radio station in Germany. However, it was absolutely clear to us that it was impossible at that time to covertly observe one of the most powerful people who stood in the National Socialist hierarchy immediately after Hitler. Any careless step would mean that we would be finished instantly. Canaris shared with me a fact that seemed suspicious to him and tried to find out the motives for the traitorous activities of the Reichsleiter. He did not rule out that Bormann was blackmailed, but believed that, most likely, the motives were boundless vanity and complexes, as well as unsatisfied ambitions to take, of course, at the right moment the place of Hitler. We now know how skillfully Bormann managed to compromise in the eyes of the Fuhrer one by one his most dangerous rivals - Goering and Goebbels.

My assumptions were confirmed only after 1946, when the opportunity presented itself to investigate the circumstances of the mysterious disappearance of Bormann from Hitler's bunker in Berlin. Repeatedly appearing in the international press allegations that the former Reichsleiter allegedly lives in the impenetrable jungle between Paraguay and Argentina, surrounded by heavily armed bodyguards, are without any foundation.

Two credible information received by me in the fifties allow us to assert that Bormann was in the Soviet Union, of course, under a false name and reliable protection.

Hitler's former deputy for the party defected to the Soviets at the moment when the Red Army, having completed the assault on Berlin, surrounded the building of the new imperial chancellery, under which Hitler and his henchmen were hiding in a deep bunker. Now Bormann is no longer alive.

Just fantastic, if you imagine how two true patriots of the Reich, Canaris and Gehlen, risking their lives, hunt down the Soviet super spy Bormann. Imagine, reader, how an admiral and a general (you can't entrust such a task to subordinates!) On a rainy night, they are buried in the garden of Bormann's villa in order to detect how the Reichsleiter, on his transmitter not controlled by the German special services, is tapping Morse code to Moscow. A good plot for a sensational detective.

But in Gehlen's message, only one last phrase corresponds to the truth: "Now Bormann is no longer alive." For 1971, when Gehlen's memoirs were published, this statement was absolutely true. Otherwise, the absurdity of this information in the book of the former head of the department "Foreign Armies - East" climbs, as they say, into the eyes.

Take, for example, the episode with the plotted assassination attempt on Churchill. It is possible that Canaris really did not like to prepare the assassination of the head of state, albeit an enemy one. It is difficult, however, to believe that after the refusal of such a responsible task, the admiral remained at the head of the Abwehr.

He would not have been arrested, but the department would have removed him immediately. And then, why did Hitler, after the "failure" with Canaris, not entrust this terrorist attack of the century to Schellenberg, who was much less scrupulous than the "little admiral"? No, in his memoirs, Gehlen does not write anything about such an assignment, and he would hardly have hidden it if there had been one. After all, Schellenberg wrote about the failed assassination attempt on Stalin, which

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁶⁹

he allegedly cooked in the fall of 1944 - respectively, on behalf of the Fuhrer himself.

If Bormann had been a Soviet agent even before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Stalin would have known all the details of Barbarossa, but he did not even know about the day of the invasion.

Gehlen did not have access to the diary of the Reichsleiter, captured by Soviet troops, among other things, for the last months of the Third Reich. On April 29, 1945, Bormann, for example, wrote indignantly: "... the traitors Jodl, Himmler and the generals leave us to the Bolsheviks" (and why be indignant - the Soviet agent would rejoice). On April 27, he vows: "We will fight and die with our Fuhrer - loyal to the grave." And Bormann kept his word: after the attempt made on May 1, 1945 to break out of the ring of Soviet troops in Berlin failed, the Reichsleiter on the night of May 2 cracked open an ampoule of potassium cyanide. Shortly after the publication of Gehlen's book, Bormann's remains were discovered in Berlin during construction work and identified from a dental pattern accurately recorded by his former dentist. Therefore, in 1973, the German prosecutor's office recognized Bormann as dead. However, some doubts about the identification procedure remained. And now, from time to time, "traces of the Reichsleiter" were found in Italy, then in Chile, then in Argentina. To put an end to these speculations, Bormann's family agreed to a genetic examination of the remains found near the Lehrter Bahnhof train station. An examination in 1997 unequivocally confirmed that these were the remains of Bormann. The version about Bormann - a Soviet agent disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Heinrich Müller also met his end in Berlin on May 2, 1945. His name and date of death are on the grave of one of the Berlin cemeteries. The exhumation showed that the remains of six people were buried in the burial. The fact that one of them could be Müller is indicated by the Gruppenführer shoulder strap found in the grave. This title was held by the chief of the Gestapo, and there were no missing Gruppenführers in Berlin in the last days of the war, except for him.

But, perhaps, there is still some grain of truth in the testimonies of Schellenberg and Gehlen? Why did they so insistently point out Bormann and Müller's connections with the Soviet Union? I think that the answer follows from that conversation with Müller, which is quoted in his memoirs by the former chief of the 6th Directorate of the RSHA. Of course, Schellenberg added a lot of gag, but Müller's main idea, it seems, conveyed correctly: it is necessary at all costs to conclude a separate peace with Stalin. For Schellenberg, who secretly wanted to reach an agreement with the Western powers, this option was completely unacceptable. It is no coincidence that in the German version of his memoirs, Müller sarcastically replied to his joking offer to head the NKVD: "You, by the nose, you can see, are drawn to the West."

In order to try to offer Stalin a separate peace, a connection with Moscow independent of the German Foreign Ministry and other special services was needed. The extensive Soviet intelligence network in Western Europe, which the Germans gave the code name "Red Chapel", just exposed by the Gestapo, could easily become such a channel. According to Schellenberg, it was Bormann, on the party line, who oversaw the investigation into the activities of the Red Chapel. So this group of Soviet agents had powerful radio transmitters - why not the possibility of transmitting to the Soviet side a proposal for a separate peace?

We find unexpected confirmation of this version in the memoirs

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special #09

the head of the "Red Chapel" of the Soviet intelligence officer Leopold Trepper, who called him "The Great Game".

Trepper was arrested on November 24, 1942 in Paris. He agreed to work under German control, hoping to warn the Center about the failure of the intelligence network and all radio transmitters. Already on December 29, the French communists reported to Moscow about the disappearance of Trepper, but there they ignored this information and continued to accept messages from radio stations that worked under the hood of the Germans at face value. Trepper, however, succeeded, secretly from the Gestapo, through a messenger who remained at large, to report the failure of the group. The message arrived in Moscow on June 7, 1943, and in September Trepper fled and went into hiding until the liberation of Paris by the Allied forces in August 1944.

According to Leopold Trepper, the Gestapo officer assigned to him, Karl Giering, the very next day after his arrest, on November 25, formulated the main content of the information that the resident should have transmitted to the Center:

"The sole purpose of the Third Reich is to make peace with the Soviet Union... The ever-increasing bloody battle between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army can please only capitalist plutocrats. Didn't the Fuhrer himself call Churchill an alcoholic and Roosevelt an unfortunate paraplegic? But here's the thing: if in neutral countries it is easy to get in touch with representatives of the Anglo-Americans, then it is almost impossible to meet emissaries of the Soviet government there. This problem remained unsolvable for us for a long time. But finally the idea came to us to use the "Red Orchestra" for this. When its network is "turned in the opposite direction", that is, it will operate under our leadership, its transmitters will become tools for reaching this world ... "

Further, according to Trepper, Giering showed several radiograms transmitted by controlled transmitters, and stated with satisfaction that in Moscow they still did not guess anything. The transmitted material contains first-class military and political information. After all, it is necessary to maintain the confidence of the Soviet side.

"So be it," the Gestapo man believed to the ward prisoner, "for several months we will make small sacrifices in the name of a great cause, and on the day when we are convinced that the Russians have no

the slightest suspicion of their networks operating in the West, on that day the second stage will begin. Then your Director will receive information of decisive importance, coming from the highest circles in Berlin. This information will contain irrefutable assurances that we are seeking a separate peace with the Soviet Union..."

Trepper commented on this passage in his memoirs as follows:

"So, that's where he drove! This is the meaning of all this staging prepared for me, this is the conclusion from the lengthy speeches! The Nazis offer me an alternative: either work for them, meaning "change of allies", and then I become one of the main pieces on the new chessboard, or accept the fact that I will simply be "eliminated" ...

What a monstrous blackmail! As the chief of the Sonderkommando rants, I feverishly, concentratedly and quickly assess the scope of this maneuver, I clearly see the trap set for me. And I come to the first conclusion: it does not surprise me that much. Indeed, it is not surprising. It had already occurred to me that the Germans did not

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle spetsslu Zh93.

they tried so much to destroy our radios and physically liquidate our people, as they tried, so to speak, to "turn them 180 degrees." During the Second World War, such tactics became the norm, and, as practice will show, I am far from the only one who was tried to be manipulated in this way. Only Giering and his friends - and this is my second, by no means less important conclusion - impudently lie, claiming that the Third Reich wants to conclude a separate peace with the Soviet Union. In November 1942, I firmly know (however, I have known this since the autumn of 1939) that in the leadership of the party, as well as in some high-ranking political and military circles of the Nazis, they cherish the hope of a compromise with the West, and that if there is any separate peace, then they will conclude it with the "capitalist-plutocrats" - be they "alcoholics" or "paralytics" - and, of course, behind the back of the USSR.

For example, the Abwehr or Admiral Canaris could stand in a similar position (by the way, his game will become clear only after the war). But for such an initiative to come from the Schellenbergs, Heydrichs, Mullers, Himmlers, the masters of the Gestapo! Well, I do not! I want to shout to Giering: "How can you make us believe that you are ready to make peace with the first socialist country? "For these fanatics, there could be no question of a separate peace, they sought only one thing: to undermine the anti-Hitler coalition. This was what this cumbersome infernal machine, to which they wanted to connect me and in which the main danger lurked, was supposed to serve: to arouse distrust, and then mutual hostility among the allies, and then reap its benefits. But we, the fighters of the "Red Orchestra", have always considered the inevitable war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union; even the non-aggression pact of 1939 did not shake our point of view."

As proof that the "masters of the Gestapo" did not seriously think about "reconciliation" with the Soviet Union, Trepper quotes the following passage from the French edition of Schellenberg's memoirs: "It was very important to enter into

contact with the Russians at the time of entering into negotiations with the West. Growing rivalry between the allied powers would strengthen our position." It turns out that the Germans needed negotiations with the USSR only as a means of putting pressure on the Western powers, a means of making them more accommodating. But in order to convince us of this, Trepper has to disregard the conversation between Schellenberg and Müller, when the chief of the Gestapo spoke so convincingly about the need for a separate peace with the Soviets. Elsewhere in his memoirs, he mentions this conversation as untrustworthy: "... Schellenberg is trying to prove that Muller gradually turned into an admirer of Stalin and his regime. Together with Bormann, he even suspects him of playing his own game with Moscow, although it does not prove it in any way." The reference to this episode in Schellenberg's memoirs was necessary for Trepper only to illustrate the existence of opposition between the leaders of the secret services of the Third Reich, but by no means in the context of choosing a separate peace.

Another inconsistency in Trepper's story is striking. Giering allegedly tried to convince the captured Soviet resident that the Germans were interested in misleading Moscow: the agents of her "Red Chapel" were still at large and were supplying valuable information. But is it possible to solve an issue of such enormous importance without being sure that you are being addressed through some intermediaries on behalf of persons who really have real power and authority? And an underground agent

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services"

Soviet intelligence is not the best channel for probing the conditions of a separate peace. Why would Himmler, Schellenberg or Muller suddenly turn to Trepper, according to legend, the modest French businessman Jean Gilbert, co-owner of the Simex export-import company? And how will Moscow then perceive such a message? At best - like rumors circulating in Paris. It is quite another matter if the Center knows that Trepper and his radio operators are operating under the control of the Gestapo. Then the Kremlin can really believe that the proposals for a separate peace come from Muller or someone higher. This means that it was extremely important for the Gestapo to make it clear to the Soviet side: Trepper and his people were taken and are now handing over only what the German special services want to transfer to Moscow.

According to Trepper, Heinz Pannwitz, who replaced Giering as head of the Red Chapel Sonderkommando, believed that radiograms alone were not enough:

"Pannwitz explained to me - and I listened to him with supposedly tense, but in fact feigned attention - that it would be a long time ago to move on to the political stage ... The new chief of the Sonderkommando offered me to move from the prison in Neuilly to a private villa where I could live under unobtrusive guard, imperceptible to me. According to Pannwitz and his superiors, contact with Moscow using radio waves alone had become insufficient, and now, in the next stage, it is necessary to establish direct contacts with her. He conceived the highly prestigious plan of sending an emissary to the Center who would inform Moscow of the desire of a rather large group of German military men to discuss the issue of a separate peace with the Soviet Union. This special envoy was supposed to carry with him documents reflecting similar sentiments in officer circles. But in his luggage there will also be papers from which

it is clear that other representatives of the German armed forces also gravitate toward a separate peace, but ... with the West.

Needless to say, this whole cunning strategy pursued one single goal - to blow up the anti-Hitler coalition, and in this sense, great persistence was shown ...

Himmler, having familiarized himself with Pannwitz's plan, said that it was too risky to send a "traveling salesman" to Moscow. As Pannwitz explained to me, he feared the pull of Communism on the good Nazi. The example of the Berlin Red Orchestra group was still fresh in his memory. That people like Schulze-Boysen or Arvid Harnack could become "Soviet agents," that men and women who feel great in high society and are free from financial worries, were drawn into the anti-Nazi struggle - all this was incomprehensible to the Gestapo brains. .

But Pannwitz did not lose heart. He told me another option. This time it was about the arrival of a representative of the Center in Paris. Without hesitating for a second, more than that, feigning the liveliest approval, I answered him that such an idea seemed to me quite feasible ...

Therefore, a detailed report was sent to the Center, stating that a group of officers wished to make contact with Moscow. At the same time, it was proposed to send an emissary to the Germans. This plan was rather far-reaching, since the meeting was scheduled at the former apartment of Hillel Katz (one of Trepper's employees. - B.S.), at rue Edmond-Roger No. 8.

However, the emissary from Moscow did not arrive.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services03

Was this sounding really intended to complicate relations between partners in the anti-Hitler coalition, and not to achieve a separate peace with the Soviet Union? If so, then the way the Germans chose to accomplish the task is strange. After all, then it was necessary to disclose at the right time information about the secret Soviet-German negotiations in order to sow mistrust between the allies. But here the chosen channel for communication was the most unfortunate. Well, how, except from the Germans or Russians themselves, could the Western powers learn about the existence of the "Red Chapel"?

The Soviet Union would, of course, hide information about negotiations with Germany on a separate peace from the allies to the last possible opportunity. Well, if information about Stalin's desire for a separate peace with the Germans had come to London and Washington from the Germans, then they would hardly have aroused confidence there. In this case, the interest of Germany was too obvious. If Bormann, Müller and other leaders of the Reich wanted to instill mutual distrust in the enemy coalition, then it would be more reasonable to start negotiations with Moscow in some neutral country. Even sending an emissary to the Soviet capital gave more chances for the publicity of the task entrusted to him, at least through Western diplomats accredited there. However, Himmler, as appears from Trepper's memoirs, refused to send a man to Moscow with such a decisive assignment. Apparently, he feared for the secrecy of the negotiations. Not very clear,

why Pannwitz, according to Trepper, speaks of "a fairly large group of German officers" who supposedly wanted a separate peace with Russia. Were they really so naive in Berlin that they thought that Stalin would be seriously interested in the desire of the captains and colonels of the Wehrmacht for a Soviet-German agreement? And as disinformation, such a message did not make sense at all. It is clear that the proposal, coming lower than from the commander of one of the German army groups, could not cause any reaction from the Soviet side. And it's a completely different matter if Bormann and Muller, people from Hitler's inner circle, who, moreover, themselves have considerable power, want a separate peace. Then the information that someone else in the Nazi elite - for example, Himmler and Schellenberg - wants a separate peace with the West, may be useful for bargaining at the Soviet-German negotiations, if they do start.

Well, about Himmler's fears that the courier sent to Moscow would be propagandized and get in the way of the German participants in the Red Chapel, Trepper probably came up with. The words attributed to the Reichsfuhrer are too close to those put into the mouth of Müller by Schellenberg in the German and French versions of his memoirs: "I'm thinking about some people from the Red Chapel - about Schulz-Boysen or Harnack. They were also people from your world (the circle to which Schellenberg belonged, who came from a wealthy intelligent family. - B.S.), but they were people of a completely different sort - they did not cling to half measures, but were real progressive revolutionaries who always sought final solutions and remained true to their convictions until their death.

In favor of the version that a real attempt by one of the German leaders to achieve a separate peace with the Soviets was connected with the Red Chapel, many details of the escape of Leopold Trepper speak. Here is how this famous escape is described in his book *The Great Game*:

"Former distrust of Berg (Deputy Chief of the Sonderkommando

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle of special services.

"Red Chapel" assigned to 'Trapper. - B.S), due to the relations that have developed between us, it has dulled ... In addition, Berg, as a result of the misfortune that befell his family, is very vulnerable. Suffering from poor health, he seeks solace in a bottle. Almost always, between two drinks, he complains of sharp pains in his stomach.

Berg's vulnerability, his penchant for alcohol, is one of the major flaws in the armor of the Sonderkommando, and I made extensive use of this in an effort to gain his trust ... I ask him about his health, advise him to take a proper treatment and promise to go with him to Bailly's pharmacy someday at 15 Rome Street, where I am sure he will find the perfect remedy for his pains. My proposal is not accidental, because this pharmacy has long been mentally listed in my list of places most favorable for escape ... Bailly Pharmacy is distinguished by one very interesting feature: it has two exits - one to the street of Rome, the other to the street du Rocher .. Tomorrow Berg, as usual, will come for me to go together to Rue de Sausse (where the safe house was. - B.S.), where we will arrive around noon. He will almost certainly offer me to go to the pharmacy and enter it with me. Then I will proceed to the counter, from there to the cash register, so that later

leave through the opposite exit. At first, Berg will be at a disadvantage: surrounded by the French (Bailly's pharmacy is always full of customers), he will shout in German, and this will hardly get anything. Will he open fire on me? Unlikely: the risk of hitting another is too great. If he tries to chase after me, then I rely on my agility and ... on his almost permanent state of intoxication. Once on the street, I hope to get to the metro station in a few minutes, get to the terminus of the Neuilly line, then transfer to a bus to Saint-Germain, where I will find my man. Leave by train from Gare Saint-Lazare? Excluded! Of course, an alarm will be announced, and the Gestapo will undoubtedly cordon off the entire district, spreading a huge net. I remember well that I have a genuine document in my hands, because every time before our departure, Berg ... hands me an identity card and a certain amount of money ... "

The Gestapo man himself went to meet Trepper's plan. Here is how the development of events is described further in the book "The Great Game":

"September 13th. I am a little feverish, I hope nothing will disturb my plan, that Berg feels no worse than usual and does not cancel his visit to me, does not send anyone to replace him. No, everything is going well: he arrives exactly at eleven-thirty. We get in the car and drive out the gate...

Berg and I are driving through Paris, approaching the goal. Berg, as was due, handed me my ID card and a banknote of five hundred francs. With an extremely sympathetic look, I inquire:

- How are you feeling today?

- It's getting worse and worse ... (It seems that he is somehow especially dejected ...) We need to stop by the pharmacy.

We pull up to Bailly's Pharmacy. Berg is half asleep. I gently nudge him with my elbow and say:

- Come on, will you come in?

In response, I hear absolutely incredible:

- Get up, buy some medicine and come back quickly...

What's on his mind? What is another maneuver? Want to test me? I look into his eyes very calmly and say:

- But, excuse me, Berg, this pharmacy has another way out.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁹⁵

"I trust you completely," he replies, laughing, "and besides, I'm too tired to climb the floors.

I don't make him repeat it twice. I enter the pharmacy and ... almost immediately I leave it on the other side. A few minutes later I'm on the subway. I get on the train. I'm going. I change in the direction of the Pont de Neuilly. I'm just unbelievably lucky. At the metro exit, I get on the bus to Saint-Germain.

Little by little I find peace. Nevertheless, mechanically, reflexively, I look around. Nobody is looking at me. Then I start thinking about Berg's possible reactions. For the first ten minutes, he will not be surprised - during this time, you can only go to a large store and buy something. In addition, at noon, there is a crowd everywhere ... Then, not understanding why I was not there, intrigued, he will go up to the second floor of the pharmacy and will look for me in all corners. This will take another good ten minutes. The Sonderkommando will arrive at the place from which I fled not earlier than in forty or fifty minutes. But then I'll be in a much quieter area ... At half past twelve I'm in Saint-Germain. I am free..."

And what do you think, dear reader, is not the behavior of Berg, and even the chief of the Sonder Team Pannwitz, too incredible? First, they transfer the arrested Trepper from prison to a villa. Then they provide him with a certificate, money and arrange daily trips to the multimillion-dollar city of Paris, where it is not so difficult to get lost in the crowd. Moreover, they are allowed to stop by pharmacies and shops along the way. Berg, having learned that there are two exits in Bailly's pharmacy, carelessly lets Trepper go there alone. I don't know about you, reader, but I get the impression that the Gestapo at that moment had only one task: to force Trepper to flee with all their might. Wilhelm Berg, probably mentally inspired Leopold Trepper for a long time: "Run away, fool, no one will touch you." And really not touched. After all, Berg, who showed a seemingly unimaginable negligence, safely retained his post. On the other hand, almost all the sub-policemen with whom Trepper came into contact during his Parisian odyssey were arrested by the Gestapo. I think that a "tail" followed Trepper right from the Bayi pharmacy.

By the way, back in January 1943, another arrested person fled - the radio operator of the "Red Chapel" Johann Wenzel, also under strange circumstances. The Gestapo, you see, left the key to the radio station on the outside of the door. Wenzel locked them in this apartment and managed to escape while the Sonderkommando employees broke the door from the inside. However, he failed to establish a connection with the Center using a makeshift transmitter.

Obviously, the Germans, after Trepper had transmitted from the outside the radiogram about the failure, just convinced Moscow that all the transmitters of the Red Chapel were working under the control of the Gestapo, were transmitting valuable information and that, consequently, their proposal for a separate peace could be treated with confidence.

Radio exchanges on this issue continued until the very end of the war. I think that Bormann and Müller expected first to agree with the Soviet side on peace terms, and then to inform Hitler about them, counting on his approval. They had no conspiracy against the Führer in their thoughts, and of course they were not any Soviet agents. Both Bormann and Müller were too mired in the crimes of the Third Reich - in particular, in the "final solution of the Jewish question" - to hope to survive under any other regime than Hitler's.

Stalin did not need a separate peace with Hitler at all.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special #056

A strong Germany would always remain a great hindrance to the Soviet

hegemony in Eastern Europe and a barrier to advance into Western Europe. Iosif Vissarionovich needed only rumors about the possibility of a Soviet-German separate peace in order to make Roosevelt and Churchill more accommodating. The materials received from the "Red Chapel" just created such rumors.

In the last days of the war, a command came from Berlin to destroy documents related to the Red Chapel. The head of the Sonderkommando, Heinz Pannwitz, who was evacuated to Germany with his subordinates, nevertheless retained some of the documents. He sensibly judged that it was necessary to surrender to the Red Army, and not to the Western allies. Indeed, in France, Pannwitz could be accused of reprisals against members of the Resistance movement and hanged or, at best, sentenced to a long prison term. In the USSR, the documents on the case of the "Red Chapel", as well as the former head of the Sonderkommando of the same name, were of a certain operational interest for the state security agencies. And Pannwitz did not lose, although he took a big risk. As Sudoplatov testifies:

Pannwitz's revelations ... were of only limited interest in the eyes of the intelligence leadership. The wide popularity of Pannwitz in the West ruled out the possibility of using him for our active operations. Since he could report on those Gestapo informers whom we, together with British intelligence, were still looking for, it was decided not to liquidate him, but to keep him in prison. Trepper, Rado and Gurevich (Brussels radio operator of the Red Chapel, who remained with Pannwitz until the end of the war and then attributed to himself the honor of "re-recruiting" the Gestapo; I think that in fact Pannwitz himself offered his services to the Soviets, using Anatoly Gurevich as an intermediary. - B.S.) shared his fate: they survived only because their testimony might be needed in the future. After ten years in prison, Pannwitz was repatriated to Germany."

The documents delivered to Moscow by Pannwitz are still kept unpublished in the archives of the FSB. Only their publication can shed light on the essence of the proposals that Muller and Bormann made in 1943 and later, as well as on what was the reaction of the Soviet side to this.

In conclusion, I want to dwell on the only assassination attempt on Hitler, which almost led to success. We are talking about the bomb that Colonel Count Claus von Stauffenberg detonated at Hitler's headquarters "Wolf's Lair" in East Prussia on July 20, 1944. Unlike the illusory assassination attempts by Japanese and German intelligence on Stalin and Soviet intelligence on Hitler, this was a very real assassination attempt, and its participants were driven by easily explainable motives. Seeing that Hitler was leading Germany into the abyss of total defeat and unconditional surrender, Stauffenberg and other participants in the conspiracy hoped to kill the Fuhrer, seize power in the country and achieve peace with the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition on the terms of maintaining Germany as an independent state within the borders of 1937. If the assassination attempt had succeeded, the conspirators had some chances of carrying out such a plan. Although it is still a question that the SS troops led by Himmler after Hitler's death would have surrendered without a fight and the main part of the Wehrmacht would have supported Beck, Goerdeller, Witzleben, Hoepner and Stauffenberg.

Hans Rattenhuber left an interesting testimony about how events developed at Hitler's Headquarters on the day of the assassination attempt:

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of the secret services

"On Thursday, July 20, 1944, at 2 p.m., a meeting of the military council was scheduled, where, among other things, the issue of arming the divisions of the "people's grenadiers" (militias) was to be discussed.

In this regard, Hitler invited Colonel Count von Stauffenberg (Chief of Staff of the Reserve Army. - B.S.), who was directly involved in the formation of the mentioned divisions, to take part in the meeting. Goering and Himmler were also to attend the meeting.

Stauffenberg, together with Lieutenant Hefter and the head of communications of the German army, General Felgibel, flew from Berlin to headquarters and reported their arrival to Field Marshal Keitel.

For reasons unknown to me, at the last moment the start of the meeting was moved to 13:30 - half an hour earlier. So I didn't even have time to notify Goering and Himmler about this change.

Shortly before Keitel and Stauffenberg came to the meeting, the latter imperceptibly, using pliers, pulled out the fuse from the infernal machine, the operation of which was calculated for a maximum of 30 minutes, and then ordered a telephone conversation with the supreme command of the ground forces.

Keitel and Stauffenberg went to the meeting, while Felgiebel and Hefter remained at the premises of officer Zander, who was in charge of the communication center at headquarters. The car also stopped here, in which Stauffenberg and Felgiebel arrived from the airfield.

On the way to the barracks where the meeting was held, Keitel's adjutant, Major Ion, wanted to help Stauffenberg carry the briefcase (since Stauffenberg had previously been seriously injured in both hands), but Stauffenberg sharply rejected this.

They entered the barracks, where there were already officers and where Hitler himself soon entered.

Maps were laid out on the table: on the left - the Eastern Front, on the right - a map of the Southern Front, and in the middle of the table - maps of the Central and Northern Fronts.

Stauffenberg, after greeting Hitler, put the briefcase on the floor, leaning it against the right leg of the table, talked a little with General Bule (head of the ground forces equipment department) and left the room to the communications center under the pretext of having to talk on the phone, where Felgiebel and Hefter were waiting for him.

During this time, the discussion of the situation on the Southern Front ended, and Hitler went to the middle of the table, where there was a map of the Central Front.

At the same time, General Bule summoned Stauffenberg, as he wanted to convey some orders to him.

When Hitler leaned over the table, and Buhle also approached this table, an explosion followed. The right leg of the table was completely

destroyed. The part of the table above it with a map of the Southern Front was knocked out, and the chandelier hanging above the table fell on the head of Colonel General Jodl.

SS-Sturmbannführer Günsche and Major Jon, who were standing at the windows, were thrown out by the force of the explosion along with the window frames. Stenographer Berger had both of his legs blown off. Severe burns and injuries were received by Generals Schmudt and Korten, as well as Lieutenant Colonel Brandt, Captain Assman, Lieutenant Colonel Borkman and General Bodenschatz. Berger, Schmudt, Korten, Brandt subsequently died from their wounds. Only one Field Marshal Keitel accidentally escaped unscathed.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁹⁸

Hitler received minor injuries to his right hand and became hard of hearing in one ear. The blast wave of Hitler's trousers were torn to shreds. Having received a nervous shock, he could not walk on his own, and two guards hardly helped him get to his bunker in this form.

Immediately after the explosion, Stauffenberg, Felgiebel and Hefter drove by car to the airfield, without knowing the details of the results of the assassination attempt.

The head of the 1st Security Department, SS-Sturmbannführer Hegel, was on his way to the barracks when the explosion was heard. He saw a column of smoke and dust and immediately ordered the entrances and exits of the headquarters to be closed.

Stauffenberg, Felgiebel and Hefter reached the guard post, where they were detained, but after a telephone conversation with the commandant's adjutant, the rates were skipped. So they got to the airfield and immediately flew to Berlin.

Hegel went to the room where the attempt was made, and after examining it, he established that the explosion did not follow from under the floorboards, but that an object standing on the floor exploded.

Hegel asked Sergeant Adam who left the room during the meeting. Adam replied that Stauffenberg was leaving and that he was looking for him, since they had ordered a telephone conversation with Berlin. Hegel reported his suspicions about Stauffenberg to Keitel and Himmler, who arrived at that time. It was immediately established that Stauffenberg, Hefter and Felgiebel flew to Berlin with suspicious haste.

With the sanction of Himmler, Hegel called the head of the SD Directorate, Müller, in Berlin and informed him of the incident and suspicions of Stauffenberg, so that appropriate measures could be taken. Müller immediately established surveillance of Stauffenberg, Felgiebel and Hefter immediately after their arrival at the airfield in order to establish a circle of conspirators.

External surveillance accompanied them to the apartments of individual participants in the conspiracy ... and then to the headquarters of Colonel General Fromm (commander of the army of the reserve. - B.S.).

When Stauffenberg and Hefter (Felgiebel went to another place) reported Fromm about the "successful assassination attempt", the latter shot them.

Probably Fromm already knew that the assassination attempt had failed.

On Himmler's orders, a "special commission of the Gestapo" was sent to headquarters to conduct a thorough investigation on the spot. Among the members of the commission, I recall a specialist in explosives - SS Sturmbannführer Wiedemann ...

In the very barracks where the explosion took place, the commission found the remains of a briefcase, pliers, a primer, and by the end of the day the whole picture of the attempt was already clear.

The driver who took the three officers to the airfield testified during interrogation that during the trip he felt a jolt, as if one of the passengers had thrown something out of the car. When examining the area, a second infernal machine was found, thrown out of the car.

An analysis of the explosives, Wiedemann told me, showed that the explosive was of English origin, but it could also have been reproduced in the chemical laboratory of the Imperial Criminal Police Office.

In the following days, Field Marshal von Witzleben, Generals Hoepner and Stief, SA Obergruppenführer Count Geldorf, and a number of officers, including General Wagner and Colonel Freytag von

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services⁹⁹

Loringofen, committed suicide.

The head of the imperial criminal police, SS Gruppenführer Nebe, was also suspected of complicity in the attempt on Hitler, who managed to escape and hide for some time until he was arrested in the vicinity of Berlin ...

It should be noted that, as General Stif testified, the attempt on Hitler was first planned in Berchtesgaden, but was not carried out, since the conspirators, due to the especially careful protection of this area, could not get out of there.

Then it was planned to carry out an assassination attempt in early July 1944 near Klesheim Castle, where Hitler was supposed to inspect new types of tanks and military uniforms. The conspirators wanted to put in the knapsacks of three soldiers demonstrating uniforms, mines, which were supposed to explode at the slightest pull on one of the straps on the knapsack. For this purpose, the explosives were brought to the headquarters of the command of the ground forces (Mauerwald forest), where they wanted to bury them, but this was prevented by the secret field police, who discovered this explosive. By order of the conspirator Quartermaster General Wagner, the investigation into this case was discontinued.

It was further established that Stauffenberg also came with an infernal machine to Himmler's headquarters, but whether he had the intention to assassinate Himmler there remained unclear.

Until the autumn of 1944, the exact origin of the explosive, through which the conspirators carried out an attempt on Hitler, was not known.

was established (the explosive turned out to be captured, English, and was provided to Stauffenberg by Abwehr officers who participated in the conspiracy. - B.S.). It is possible that this is why he testified to Heaven, but I do not know this.

The experience of the assassination attempt on July 20 proves that even the possibility of bringing a bomb into the room where Hitler was was by no means a guarantee of success. Stauffenberg, who lost his right hand and two fingers of his left hand in Tunisia, could not use a pistol to assassinate, and it was almost impossible to pull it out and fire an aimed shot during the meeting. He could not detonate a bomb or a grenade by directly throwing it at the Fuhrer. All that remained was a bomb with a delayed action fuse. But in this case, the attacker could not predict in what position in relation to the laid charge the victim would be at the time of the explosion. Hitler was saved by an oak table, over which he bent, examining a map of the situation on the front of Army Group Center. In addition, Colonel Brandt, who was hampered by Stauffenberg's briefcase, moved it to the other side of the table leg, so that now the massive pedestal shielded the Fuhrer from the bomb. Even under such favorable circumstances at first for the assassination attempt, Stauffenberg managed to place a briefcase with a bomb at the very feet of Hitler! - success depended only on chance. By chance, the meeting was suddenly transferred to the barracks due to the heat, and if it had been held, as usual, in a bunker, where the blast wave would have caused much more damage, then Hitler would have had much less chance of surviving.

If the Fuhrer survived, the plot was doomed. Stauffenberg and his associates immediately after the plane landed in Berlin, according to Rattenhuber, were "under the hood" of surveillance by Gestapo chief Müller. The conspirators had no support either among the people or among the bulk of the soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret fight special service * 69

Hitler, a convinced atheist, attributed his salvation not to God, but to Providence. Eight hours after the assassination attempt, he delivered an address to the German nation by radio. His Russian translation was published by the Vlasov newspaper Volunteer. I will quote this text, remarkable in its way, about many things to us, almost in full:

"German citizens and citizens!

I do not know for the umpteenth time that an assassination attempt was prepared and carried out on me. If I address you today, I do it for two reasons:

1. So that you hear my voice and know that I am safe and healthy;
2. In order for you to learn the details of a crime that has no parallel in the history of the German people.

A very small clique of vain, unscrupulous and at the same time criminally stupid officers created a secret conspiracy to eliminate me and, together with me, liquidate the command headquarters of the German armed forces. Bomb planted by Colonel Count

von Stauffenberg, exploded two meters to my right. A number of my valuable employees were seriously injured by it - one of them died.

I myself was completely unharmed, except for light skin abrasions, bruises and burns. I perceive this as a confirmation of the instruction given to me by Providence to continue to strive towards the realization of my life goal in the same way as I have done so far.

For I can solemnly declare before the whole nation that from the day I came to the Wilhelmstrasse, I had only one thought - to faithfully fulfill my duty, and that since I was convinced of the inevitability and urgency of war, I knew in fact, only care and work, and in countless days and sleepless nights I lived only for my people.

At an hour when the German army is waging the most difficult struggle, and in Germany, as in Italy, there was found an insignificant small group of people who helped, that they could stab the nation in the back, as in 1918. This time they were gravely mistaken.

The assertion of these usurpers that I am not alive has been refuted from the moment I, my dear German fellow citizens, address you with this speech. The circle represented by these usurpers is exceptionally small (here one recalls Lenin's famous words: "The circle of these revolutionaries is narrow, they are terribly far from the people." - B.S.). With the German armed forces and, in particular, with the German ground forces, he has nothing in common. This is an insignificantly small gang of criminal elements, which will now be mercilessly destroyed.

To finally restore order, I appointed Reich Minister Himmler commander of all rear troops. In order to replace the Chief of the General Staff, who had temporarily retired due to illness, I called Colonel General Guderian to the General Staff instead of him and appointed him, one of the most experienced military leaders of the Eastern Front.

In all other institutions of the Reich, everything remains unchanged. I am convinced that, after the liquidation of this insignificant clique of traitors and conspirators, we will create in the rear the atmosphere that the fighters at the front need. For it is completely unacceptable that at a time when thousands and millions of soldiers are sacrificing the last in the front lines, an insignificant band of ambitious and miserable creatures in the rear could try to prevent this sacrifice.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret struggle spetsslu Zh63.

This time we will settle accounts with them in the way that is customary among us National Socialists. I am convinced; that at this hour every decent officer and every brave soldier will understand our actions.

What fate would have befallen Germany if the assassination attempt had succeeded, perhaps only a very few can imagine. I am personally grateful to Providence and the Creator not because He saved my life - my life consists in caring and working for my people - but I am grateful to Him for giving me the opportunity to continue to take care of the people and continue my work in such a way that so that I can answer for her before my

conscience.

It is the duty of every German, whoever he may be, to give a merciless rebuff to these elements, either to immediately arrest or, at the slightest resistance, to destroy them without hesitation. Orders have been issued for all military units. They will be unquestioningly executed in accordance with the traditions of obedience that are inherent in the German army.

Once again I especially greet you, my old comrades-in-arms, because I managed to avoid a fate that for myself did not hide anything terrible, but which would have brought many horrors to the German people. I see in this the finger of Providence, indicating that I must continue my work and therefore I will continue it.

The Fuhrer did not have long to continue his dirty work. Nine months later, in the bunker of the Reich Chancellery, in a burning Berlin, through the streets of which Soviet tanks rumbled, Adolf Hitler committed suicide by taking poison and immediately shooting himself, for safety. The conspirators turned out to be by no means "an insignificantly small gang." Several thousand people were arrested on charges of involvement in the events of July 20, of which about two hundred were executed, and several dozen officers preferred suicide.

Hitler, betraying the arrested to the merciless so-called People's Court, remarked:

"This time I will deal with them without any. These criminals will not appear before a military court, where their accomplices sit and where trials are dragged out. They will be thrown out of the Wehrmacht and brought before the People's Court. They will not receive an honest bullet, but will be hanged as vile traitors! The court of honor will throw them out of the Wehrmacht, and then it will be possible to try them as civilians, so that they will not tarnish the prestige of the Wehrmacht. They should be judged with lightning speed; don't let them make any speeches. And to carry out the sentence within two hours after its pronouncement! They should be hung right there without any pity. And most importantly - do not give them time for long speeches. Well, Freisler (Chairman of the People's Court. - B.S.) will take care of that. This is our Vyshinsky.

The Fuhrer was impressed by the experience of the Soviet "quick-shot" justice of the 1930s.

The Vlasov newspaper Volunteer, which published Hitler's speech on July 20, was edited by the same G. N. Zhilenkov, whose name appears in the protocol of interrogation of Tavrin in the case of an attempted assassination of Stalin. In an editorial entitled "The killer's hand is out", Zhilenkov slandered Stauffenberg and his associates in regard to the failed plot:

"The pathetic creatures wanted to oppose Providence. Crazy, unable to think, they decided on an act that, if successful, would bring not only the German people, but all civilized

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services?

boundless misfortune to the world (the civilized world had a completely different opinion. - B.S.).

We are not yet interested in who is behind these criminals, whether they were bribed or persuaded. It is only important for us to establish that there were scoundrels ready for this crime ... History teaches that always and under all circumstances there were people whose criminal instinct or morbid ambition made them tools either of their vicious character or their inspirers. The peoples of France, England, America, Russia and a number of other states know from their own experience about such crimes and the consequences associated with them (here the former secretary of the district party committee meant revolutions and terrorist acts, so fatal in the history of these countries. - B.S.). The criminal banner under which stood the Fuhrer who made an attempt on his life has nothing to do with that unshakable legitimacy of history, which gives birth to all great things through sacrifice and suffering ...

We, the Russian people, who have embarked on a joint struggle against the enemies of culture and civilization, the Bolsheviks and plutocrats, are happy that the leader of the European liberation struggle, Adolf Hitler, can continue his historical mission. We know that the hand of man is not able to arrest the development of what the highest justice decides. And we also know that our joint struggle will lead to the liberation of our beloved Motherland, our great Russian people, all of whose aspirations are directed towards the hour of its liberation...

Adolf Hitler will show us the way to a happy future. In the confidence of this, we bring our sincere and joyful greetings to the leader of the all-European liberation struggle. Long live the Russian-German military commonwealth!"

Vlasov, Zhilenkov and other leaders of the ROA can be understood. After all, they were in close contact with many of the conspirators, in particular, with Stauffenberg himself and Colonel Baron Freytag von Loringofen, who committed suicide a few days after the assassination attempt. The Vlasovites could seriously fear that they, too, would be drawn to the conspirators, with all the ensuing dramatic consequences. So they assured - a tactical move - the Germans of their complete loyalty and showed delight over the miraculous salvation of Hitler, inadvertently, however, betraying their fear of a thorough investigation of the connections of Stauffenberg and his friends: "... we are not interested in who is behind these criminals ". In an intimate circle, Vlasov spoke about Hitler in a completely different way. For example, he said to one of the German liaison officers, Sergei Frelich: "How could it happen that the German people are running after this evil dwarf! After all, I appreciate and honor this people and I presented him to my officers as a model of bravery, courage, consciousness of duty and efficiency.' Two dictators, Stalin and Hitler, Andrey Andreevich rightly put on the same plane:

"Both rule with an iron hand, both need the help of the most experienced information and punitive bodies, both use the weaknesses of the human soul, both spread a sense of fear, because of which no one dares to express a critical opinion to the ruler. Therefore, they are surrounded by toady opportunists and have lost a real idea of what is happening. This becomes especially fatal in the military field. Of these two criminals, Stalin is undoubtedly the smarter and much more dangerous, therefore, it is first of all necessary to fight against him. If I succeed in enlisting the help of another criminal for this purpose, then I

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. secret fight

special service@3}

I am sure of success not only in the fight against Stalin, but also in the subsequent inevitable conflict with Hitler.

The traitor general preferred not to remember how faithfully he served "a smarter and more dangerous criminal." And he would have continued to serve and, perhaps, would have taken Berlin in the spring of 1945, if he had not been captured in the summer of 1942.

Stauffenberg, it must be said, cherished a noble but unrealizable plan: after the assassination of Hitler, Germany, with the help of the ROA, dumps Stalin and concludes an honorable peace with the new Russian government created by Vlasov. In fact, even if the plot was successful, the fate of the Vlasovites would still be sad. Let us assume, although it is hard to believe, that the powers of the anti-Hitler coalition agree to deal with the new German government and refuse the condition of unconditional surrender. Then an independent Germany led by Beck, Goerdeler and the same Stauffenberg could have survived, albeit not within those borders compared to 1937. But an indispensable condition for any peace agreement in any case would be the unconditional extradition of all the leaders of the Vlasov Russian Liberation Army. So for Vlasov and his associates - no matter where you throw it, EVERYWHERE WEDGE.

Some of the participants in the conspiracy against Hitler were in the same unenviable position. Take, for example, the chief of the criminal police Arthur Nebe (previously, on the Eastern Front, he commanded a Sonderkommando that carried out the "final solution to the Jewish question"). Therefore, in the event of a successful assassination attempt on July 20, the gallows for crimes against humanity would have been waiting for him.

Interestingly, just on July 20, 1944, Himmler was supposed to receive Vlasov. But because of the assassination attempt, this meeting was postponed and took place only on September 14. In a Soviet trial in July 1946, Zhilenkov testified:

"... After my trip to the Lvov region and establishing contact with Himmler's representative d'Alken, through the mediation of the latter, we managed to organize a meeting between Vlasov and Himmler. I knew that Himmler called Vlasov a runaway pig and a fool. It fell to my lot to prove to d'Alken that Vlasov is not a pig and not a fool.

Perhaps the Reichsfuehrer SS Georgy Nikolaevich was able to convince of this, but of course not the Soviet unrighteous judges.

Let's imagine for a moment that the attempt on Stalin, which Tavrín-Shilo was supposed to carry out in the fall of 1944, nevertheless took place, but ended, like the attempt on Stauffenberg, in complete failure. Personally, I think that the Germans did not really plan any attempt on the Soviet leader, but let's still dream up a little.

So, on November 6, 1944, Major Tavrín penetrates the Bolshoi Theater to a joint ceremonial meeting of the Moscow Council of Workers' Deputies with party and public organizations of Moscow, dedicated to the 27th anniversary of the October Revolution, and fires a shot from a panzerknacke. Yes, I missed it. The mine exploded a few meters from Stalin and only slightly concussed him. Terrorist

captured by the guards who came to the rescue. And a few hours later, Joseph Vissarionovich, who came to his senses, makes an appeal to the Soviet people on the radio:

"Comrades! Citizens!

Brothers and sisters!

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret fight special service 6%.

Soldiers of our Army and Navy!

I turn to you, my friends. The vile mercenaries of German fascism tried to destroy the Supreme Commander of the Red Army. You hear my voice. I am alive and almost unharmed. A mine fired by an enemy hand exploded three meters from me, killing and injuring several of my dear employees. A miserable bunch of pygmies conspired to destroy the military and political headquarters of the Soviet people together with me, to make our people slaves of the German fascists. But they will not succeed in turning back the course of history and stealing from our people the victory in the Patriotic War, which is already close.

I was intact, except for a few scratches and bruises. Nothing will prevent me from keeping the oath given over the body of the great Lenin and achieving the triumph of communism in our great and happy country. I can confirm this oath today. I have always thought only about the welfare of our Soviet people, which is above all for me.

At the hour when the Red Army, having liberated our land forever from the Nazi scum, is approaching the lair of the fascist beast with heavy fighting in order to hoist the Banner of Victory over Berlin, there were nonentities who tried to stab it in the back. But they miscalculated badly. And now, my dear compatriots, I address you with this speech. These scoundrels represent no one but German intelligence. They have nothing in common with our valiant Red Army. This is a handful of renegades that will be mercilessly destroyed.

To ensure reliable order in the rear, I appointed a member of the State Defense Committee, People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Comrade Beria, commander of all troops of both the NKVD and the Red Army in the rear areas and subordinated to him the military counterintelligence agencies SMERSH. I appointed my deputy Marshal of the Soviet Union, Comrade Zhukov, a seasoned combat commander, as commander of the 1st Belorussian Front advancing on Berlin.

I am convinced that after the elimination of this insignificant handful of traitors and conspirators, we will finally create in the rear the atmosphere that is necessary for the fighters at the front. It is absolutely unacceptable when thousands and millions of soldiers in the trenches sacrifice their lives and health - in the rear, a vile gang of bandits and double-dealers interfere with this heroic struggle. We will settle accounts with them mercilessly, in the Bolshevik way. I believe that every decent and honest officer and every brave Red Army soldier will understand the justification for our merciless measures to preserve calm at the front and in the rear.

What fate would have befallen the Soviet Union if the assassination attempt

managed? I am sure that the peoples of our country would rally around the Party, its Leninist Central Committee and the Soviet Government and would not allow the insidious enemy to steal the Victory we have suffered. This crime would not have been able to shake the moral and political unity of Soviet society, hardened in the flames of war, would not have destroyed the friendship of the peoples of the USSR, would not have destroyed Soviet patriotism. My life belongs to the people, and today I am happy only because I can calmly continue my work for the benefit of our beautiful country.

It is the duty of every Soviet patriot, whoever he may be, to put up a resolute rebuff to the criminal, treacherous elements, to immediately arrest them, and at the slightest resistance, destroy them on the spot.

The main ideological inspirers of the conspiracy have already been arrested - the former

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services

head of military counterintelligence SMERSH Abakumov, former deputy head of the Main Directorate of the formation of the Red Army Kulik, former army commander Gordov and several other traitors who directed the hand of the assassin, German intelligence agent Tavrín, who was captured at the scene of the crime. Some abroad will probably assert that the purge of the Red Army of spies, assassins and wreckers will "weaken" its combat power, introduce "decay" into the ranks of our glorious Armed Forces, and even "shake" the Soviet system itself. How can the Red Army and the Soviet system be shaken and disintegrated by the liquidation of harmful and hostile elements? Only the root-destruction of the Trotskyist-Bukharinian infection, the execution of Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, Rykov, Bukharin and other werewolves cleared our rear from the fascist "fifth column" and allowed us to stand and break the back of Hitler in the Patriotic War. A miserable bunch of spies, murderers and wreckers who groveled before foreign countries, imbued with a slavish feeling of cringing before every foreign bureaucrat, ready to go into his espionage service - does anyone really need this gang of corrupt slaves? Whom can she "decompose"? They themselves have long since decomposed and stink like corpses.

Long live our victorious Red Army!

Long live our glorious Navy!

Long live the mighty Soviet people!

Long live our great Motherland!

Death to the German fascist invaders and their vile henchmen and hirelings!"

It can be assumed that, since Tavrín had the documents of an SMERSH officer in his hands, the first suspicion would fall on the head of military counterintelligence V.S. Abakumov. The head of such a powerful special service, penetrating the entire Red Army, Viktor Semenovitch would have been immediately arrested. Immediately, of course, it would have turned out that Tavrín's certificate was false, but Abakumov would not have been released anyway. In fact, he was arrested on July 13, 1951, but if there was a reason, Stalin removed

Abakumov would have been before - for example, on November 6, 1944. In addition, the participation of the head of SMERSH would give the imaginary "conspiracy" such a valued scope by the authorities. In the same way, the disgraced Marshal Grigory Ivanovich Kulik, demoted to major general in 1942, would have been a very suitable candidate for the role of a conspirator. Here, too, in my imagination I have not deviated too far from the truth. The turn of Kulik, his immediate superior, the commander of the Volga Military District, General Vasily Nikolaevich Gordov (the former marshal served as his deputy), and the chief of staff of the district, General Philip Trofimovich Rybalchenko, came in 1946. They were first dismissed, and at the beginning of the next 1947, they were arrested on charges of anti-Soviet agitation. The reason was the recordings of intimate conversations between the generals and their wives, recorded on tape by people of the Minister of State Security Abakumov. Here is what, in particular, Kulik said to Gordov in the hungry 1946 (hungry, of course, not for generals) after one of the feasts with an abundance of strong drinks:

"Beria is still that fruit. Just wait, he will become instead of Stalin, and it will be for sure, we will cry all together ... These are still flowers. Rykov was not mistaken when he said that in 10-15 years the Soviet government would become so cruel that the tsarist order would turn pale...

Collective farms as a system of managing the land are unprofitable.

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special #66

That is why the workers and peasants are starving, while the members of the Soviet government live like landowners..."

It seems that the old SR leaven fermented in the former marshal: Grigory Ivanovich was a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party from 1913 to October 1917. Yes, and lived the memory of the poor family in which he was born and raised.

Gordov was also outraged by the hopeless Soviet poverty: "What does our peasant need today? Once a year, wash yourself in a bath with soap and light a kerosene lamp. Under the tsar, there were not so many different ministries for fuel, and the village had kerosene. From whom? From one Nobel ... In a year after the war, we could not do what Czechoslovakia did in three months. The deputies' mouths have been hung with locks of blessings, so we are silent at the sessions. Try to criticize the government..."

Rybalchenko echoed his friends: "Ah, what can I say, in our country there are more managers than workers. Quite according to the proverb: one with a bipod, and seven with a spoon.

To Adjutant Marshal Zhukov, Lieutenant-General Vasily Grigorievich Terentyev, Gordov spoke completely seditious words: "The government does not care about the people and the death of millions, it is busy self-sustaining."

And with his wife, Vasily Nikolaevich shared his innermost thoughts after the humiliating resignation:

- I want to die. So that neither you nor anyone else be a burden.

- You should not die, but to achieve your goal and take revenge on these scoundrels. - Wife, Tatyana Vladimirovna, on New Year's Eve 1947 was determined.

- Neither you nor me, it is unprofitable, - objected Vasily Nikolayevich.

- Profitable, - the wife did not let up, not suspecting that Sergo Beria's colleagues had long ago installed microphones in their bedroom. - We do not know what will happen in a year. Maybe what is being done is for the best.

"It's not profitable for you to be with me," Gordov reasoned soberly, apparently already having a presentiment that there was not long left to walk free.

- Why are you worried about me? - Tatyana Vladimirovna was indignant. - Oh, Vasily, you are a weak man!

- I think a lot, - the general admitted, - what should I do now. When all these troubles are over, what should I do? Do you know what turns me on? The fact that I ceased to be a lord ... - In his district, Vasily Nikolayevich felt himself both a king and a god, and not just a military commander. And here - the prospect of life on only one, albeit considerable, general's pension, without the former honor and respect, forgotten by colleagues, abandoned by friends, disgraced general! There was something to be desperate about.

-I know. Spit on this business! If only Stalin accepted you, - his wife tried to console him.

But from such consolations, Gordov inflamed even more and finally got rid of illusions about the "good Stalin" and the "dashing boyars" surrounding him:

- Yes. On the other hand, he ruined everything.

"Maybe what happened is even for the better," Tatyana Vladimirovna remarked philosophically.

But Vasily Nikolaevich, apparently, already in the depths of his soul felt that the best would not come, and finally cut the truth-womb:

-Why should I go to Stalin and humiliate myself in front of ("more

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services@U

followed by unprintable expressions addressed to comrade Stalin, "the Chekists noted, delicately not daring to entrust the paper with the blasphemy that the general raised against the generalissimo. - B.S.)...

- I am sure that he will stay only a year, - his wife expressed a very seditious thought. If desired, these words could easily be interpreted as intent on a terrorist attack or as participation in a conspiracy to prepare a coup d'état.

"I say," Gordov continued, "how he was ... (here again unprintable words about Joseph Vissarionovich. - B.S.) when he called me for an appointment ... (again obscene curses. - B.S.) , crying, sitting

such a pitiful one (it was about the appointment of Gordov as commander of the Stalingrad Front at the moment when Paulus's divisions were rushing towards the city. - B.S.). And will I go to him now? What - should I go and humiliate myself to the limit, say: "Guilty of everything, I am devoted to you to the marrow of my bones," when this is not true? I can't see him, I can't breathe the same air with him! This is ... (swearing again. - B.S.) who ruined everything. Well, how is it?! And you push me, you say, go to Stalin. Why am I going? To tell him that I'm a morel in front of you? That I want to serve your dastardly cause, huh?...

- Then what are you worried about? - wife was surprised.

- Well, yes, to say that I want to serve your cause? Is this why you send me? I can't, I can't. This means that I must end myself politically... What this man did - he ruined Russia, because Russia is no more. And I never stole anything. I can't be dishonest. You keep saying: go to Stalin. So, go to him and say: "I'm sorry, I made a mistake, I will honestly serve you, faithfully." To whom? I will honestly serve meanness, savagery? The Inquisition is solid, people are just dying! Oh, if only you knew something!

"Then you don't have to worry so much," Tatyana Vladimirovna tried to calm her nervous husband. But there was no way to stop Vasily Nikolaevich.

- What ruined me, - the disgraced general confessed, - is that I was elected a deputy. This is where my death lies, - Vasily Nikolayevich added prophetically. - I went to the districts, and when I saw everything, all this terrible, - here I was completely reborn. I couldn't look at it. From here my moods, thoughts (obviously, reflections. - B.S.) started, I began to express them to you, to someone else, and it went like a platform. I'm talking now, I have such convictions that if collective farms are removed today, tomorrow there will be order, there will be a market, everything will be fine. Let people live, they have the right to life, they have won life for themselves, they defended it!

Tatyana Vladimirovna responded to this patriotic impulse with words that equally accurately characterize the mood in the country both immediately after the Second World War and at the end of the 20th century:

- Now no one seeks to bring any benefit to society. Now they do not live for this, but only in order to earn a piece of bread. It is not interesting now to live for society ...

- No, this must end, of course, - Gordov summed up the gloomy conversation with inescapable Russian optimism. - It seems to me that if Zhukov had been left in place for another two years (in June 1946 he fell into disgrace, was removed from the post of commander-in-chief of the Ground Forces and sent to command the secondary Odessa military district. - B. S.), he would have done differently...

In one of the conversations, Rybalchenko told Gordov: "I still think

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services68

that it won't even be a decade before we get punched in the face. Oh, and it will! If anything survives at all (he made a mistake only in terms: the Soviet Union

collapsed not in the mid-1950s, but in the early 1990s. - B.S.) ... How our prestige is falling, terribly simple! Even such as the Hungarians, the Czechs, and even then they never said that we support you. No one will follow the Soviet Union ... "

In principle, the conversations of the disgraced generals can be regarded as a kind of parody of the anti-Hitler conspiracy on July 20: unlike the German conspirators, Kulik, Gordov and Rybalchenko did not go beyond talk, and could not go. During the investigation, Kulik, at one of the last interrogations, stated: "I ask you to believe that no practical measures of terror against members of the Soviet government were discussed in my presence." And how, one wonders, even when they were at command posts in the Volga Military District, three generals could actually prepare and carry out a terrorist act against not only Stalin - Molotov or Malenkov? What kind of military coup could they think of, sitting in Kuibyshev, hundreds of kilometers from Moscow? But Stalin punished for conversations as strictly as for specific deeds. The Generalissimo wanted to rein in the victors of Germany and Japan, the conquerors of Berlin and Vienna, Prague and Budapest.

At the trial, which took place on August 24, 1950, Kulik pleaded guilty to criticizing the Stalinist war strategy: "... When I was in Germany to prepare a military operation, Zhukov came to me, who, after inspecting the positions, invited me to dine. During dinner, a conversation began about the methods of warfare, and Timoshenko again began to play me, saying that all of us old men had been removed from command and the youth had gone into action. That the war is now going on not in quality, but in quantity (as if Timoshenko, Kulik and Zhukov fought with quality! - B.S.). I agreed with this statement of Tymoshenko, shared his statements, took part in the criticism of the offended faces of the leadership of the High Command.

V. V. Ulrikh, who presided over the trial, read Gordov's testimony to Grigory Ivanovich: "In conversations with Rybalchenko and Kulik, who were closer to me, I expressed a threat against the leaders of the CPSU (6) and the government. At the same time, I repeatedly called the leaders of the CPSU (6) and the government a ruling clique and a handful of tyrants and accused them of allegedly plundering the country and making it impoverished for the sake of personal enrichment ... Sharing my hostile moods, Rybalchenko and Kulik also viciously slandered government and, accusing it of inability to lead the country, agreed to the point that such a government must be overthrown ... "

And the former marshal was forced to admit: "There was a case when Gordov left the hospital and went with Rybalchenko to my apartment, we had a conversation, and Gordov said: "The devil knows, they brought the country to a state of poverty. Then, when Stalin was ill, Gordov said that there was some kind of government bunch of tyrants. In my presence, Gordov and Rybalchenko never talked about Stalin and the overthrow of the Soviet government, because they knew that I was close to Stalin, and they were afraid of me. Perhaps they were talking together, without my presence ... Yes,

Gordov and Rybalchenko are anti-Soviet people with whom I had anti-Soviet conversations, which I did not notice before and realized this only in prison.

In the last word, Kulik asked for indulgence: "I was embittered

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. The secret struggle of special services

against the Soviet government and the party, which I could not survive as a Bolshevik, and this brought me to the dock. I made anti-Soviet statements, which I repent of, but I ask you to understand that I am not an enemy in my soul, that I accidentally fell into this swamp, which dragged me in, and I could not get out of it. I turned out to be politically short-sighted and did not report on the actions of Gordov and Rybalchenko in a timely manner.

Stalin did not spare Kulik. On August 25, 1950, he was shot. On the same day, Gordov and Rybalchenko were tried. They pleaded guilty, but they still didn't save their lives. Vasily Nikolayevich, at a closed meeting of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, agreed that he had "unhealthy conversations about collectivization and during one such conversation he made an attack against Stalin," but assured that he was neither an enemy nor a counter-revolutionary and passionately loves his homeland.

The German conspirators on July 20, for the most part, did not ask for mercy at the trial, and they understood the inevitability of death sentences. They claimed that they saw the elimination of Hitler as the only way to save Germany. The Soviet generals-pseudo-conspirators did not defend their anti-Stalinist views during the trials. Several factors played a role here. German generals and politicians were held accountable for the failed assassination attempt on the Fuhrer and the real conspiracy to seize power. Gordov, Kulik and Rybalchenko were tried for talking alone. They had already spent several years in prison and hoped that capital punishment would not be applied to them. The different mentality of the German aristocrats, who formed the backbone of the July 20 conspiracy, and Soviet nominees from the worker-peasant environment also affected. Stauffenberg, Beck and their associates hoped after the assassination of Hitler to eliminate the Nazi regime and return to the democracy of the Weimar Republic. Kulik, Gordov and Rybalchenko did not go further than thinking about improving Soviet power and replacing Stalin with someone more tolerant and less cruel. Kulik, for example, testified in court: "... We discussed if something happens to Stalin, then who can replace him? I said that Molotov could replace him, but he is also already old, and Gordov or Rybalchenko said that Voznesensky could better replace him.

The imaginary conspirators had even fewer opportunities to eliminate Stalin than the agents of the German or Japanese special services.

Did Stalin have plans to assassinate Hitler, and did Hitler have plans to eliminate Stalin and other members of the Big Three? Was Japanese intelligence going to destroy the Soviet leader with the help of the former Commissar of State Security Lyushkov? I am afraid that today all these questions will have to be answered in the negative rather than in the positive.

How did wartime espionage affect the outcome of the war? I think almost nothing. Sometimes German agents reported really valuable information of strategic importance, but their use was determined by the general strategic concept and vision of the war by Hitler himself and the generals closest to him. And the main decisions on the conduct of major military operations were usually taken regardless of the presence of certain intelligence reports.

Although more than half a century has passed since the end of the war, the preparation by the secret services of assassination attempts on Stalin and Hitler, the actions of German intelligence in the Soviet rear and Soviet intelligence in the territory of the Reich and in the occupied territories remain one of the darkest issues of history. There are much more white spots, as readers could see, than firmly established facts, when we can confidently

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special Service 99

say: it was so, and not otherwise. After all, we have to rely mainly on the memoirs of former employees of the special services and on documents published by the same special services. Here, the truth is always bizarrely intertwined with fiction, due to which there are always several possible versions of the same event, the biography of this or that famous agent. Therefore, about intelligence and failed attempts on the greats of this world, especially when the time distance with the past is only a few decades, stories and novels have been written and will be written more often than historical studies. My book, for which I tried not only to take firmly established facts, but also to analyze all existing versions and hypotheses, is completed. At the end of the journey, there were no fewer questions than at the beginning. But it cannot be otherwise until the archives of the Soviet, German and Japanese special services of the era of the Second World War are opened to independent researchers. Probably, this will have to wait another decade. So let's leave the final answer to all questions to historians of the twentieth century.

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I.V. Stalin (1978-1953)

Adolf Hitler
11959-1945)

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People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of
the USSR N.I. Jerzy (1895-1940)

People's Commissar of Internal Affairs
of the USSR L.P. Beria (1899-1953)

5.3. Kobulov (1904 - 1953)

V.S. Abakumov { 1904 - 1953)

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N.I. Eitingon (1899-1951) P.A. Sudoplatov (1907-1998)

NKEL employees near Moscow

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Head of the Directorate Head of the Main Directorate of Intelligence and
Counterintelligence - Imperial Security High Command Reinhard Heindrich

German Admiral Friedrich (1903-1942)

Nyailhelm Canary

(1892-1945)

Chief II Management - Head of the Chief

Reich Security Administration (RSHA) Walter Bezotiaesnocti
Ernst Schellenbere (1900-1952) Kaltenbruinor
(1903-1946}

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Commissar Genrikh Samoilovich
Poshkov (1900-1945)

in Tokno. July 1928

Press conference by G.S. Linikova in Tokyo

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N.I. Kuznetsov (1911-1944) in I.I. Kuznetsov, aka Drome Siritsera
Lkftvaive Ober-Leutenite Paul Ziebet

Old Rivne

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Partisan Commander Head of AoEitura Intelligence of the Pobemiteli
Detachment and the Pobediteli Detachment L.N. Medvedev
{ 1598-1954) A.A. Lukiy (1901—?)

D.N. Medvedev in partisan otriye conduct an analysis of the operation

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Razneychitsa Lidia Lisovskaya Razveychitsa Maria Mikota

The hotel frequented by Lieutenant Siebert

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Reich Commissar of Ukraine Erich
Koch (1896-1961).

Erich Koch among the highest officers of the Reich:
Far left - Alfred Rosenberg {1993-1946}, the
main ideologue of Nazism

The building that housed the residence of the Reichskommissar Koch

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Oberleitenite Arvzd Harnak

Havro Schulze Boysen

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Oberleitenite Arvzd Harnak

Havro Schulze Boysen

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Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller (1901-?) The torture chamber in the basements led the investigation into the activities of the Estonian underground organization in the Red Chapel"

The last one on the left is Martin Bormann (1909-1945) who personally oversaw the follow-up to the "Red Chapel" through the years of the lake. Rydom stand

A. Ipler, E. Kach and ad'innani Hitlere - Schaub. Vynnitsa, summer 1942 soda

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N.I. Tavria (1909-1952) and L.Ya. Shilova (1922-1952) before being thrown into the USSR

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P.I. Tavria in the
form of a Soviet officer
with
shurmbanyurerolm
Graf

P. Tavrins operation is filmed "for history"

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A set of stamps and a font for forging documents, taken from
Pyotr Tavrins

Boris Vadimovich Sokolov: "The hunt for Stalin, the hunt for Hitler. Secret Wrestling Special Service 09

! shells to him

